

DECISION.

VOL. II.

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DECISION.

A Tale.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF CORRECTION, &c.

Say, in this rapid tide of human ruin,
Is there no rock on which man's tossing thought
Can rest from terror, dare his fate survey,
And boldly think it something to be born?

YOUNG.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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DECISION.

CHAP. I.

AFTER a short and pleasant voyage, Horace Fitzallen landed at Philadelphia. The first thing that struck him with astonishment, was the marked difference in his landing, and in that he had often witnessed at the Bay of Dublin, where the crowds of half-naked "*craters*," demanding, "What would I do for his honour?" "Where would his honour be going?" while they stun or bewilder the senses, relieve for a few pence, all the trouble of removing luggage, calling coaches, &c. &c. and pass the custom-house with an adroitness and facetious

civility, that even if it annoys, cannot fail of amusing the traveller.

On the banks of the Delaware, Horace in vain looked round for a broad-shouldered fellow, who would cheerfully take the burden of his trunks ; — no such a one appeared : his servant, an Irish lad, whose travels before had not extended beyond Cork, and very seldom so far, turning to a tall meagre fellow, who Pat thought just waiting to be employed, good-naturedly exclaimed, “ Och, then man, can’t ye be taking his honour’s trunks, like a fine fellow ? ”

At the surly reply, “ Take them yourself,” Pat stared aghast ; but turning to another, repeated his request with no better success ; until losing his patience, of which he boasted but a small share, his uplifted sinewy fist and sparkling eyes threatened destruction among the sons of equality, which Horace observing, seized the raised arm, and told him to call a coach.

Pat slowly lowered his arm, and told the perplexed Horace, "this vile place had no coaches fit for a jantleman to be pitting his bones into, —and 'twas just kilt with boderation he was."

"What will I do?" demanded Horace of a young man, who had been his fellow passenger.

"I would advise you," replied he, coolly, "to carry any thing you may want, and send a cart for your heavier trunks, — it is the way I shall do with my things."

"And leave my luggage on the quay," said Horace, in a tone that expressed his mistrust.

"You are not in Ireland," was the cool laconic reply.

"Alas!" thought Horace, "I am not indeed; I begin to suspect there is too much of this same equality here for my taste."

At this moment a young man, in the garb of a Quaker, addressed him with

“ Friend, art thee called Horace Fitzallen ?”

The courteous reply called forth a rejoinder ; and Horace found the provident kindness of Robert Penn had anticipated his wishes, by sending servants and a cart, as well as his son Charles Penn, to conduct him to his future abode.

This attention soothed the haughty spirit of Horace, and clothing his fine features with the happiest smile, he met the extended hand of friend Robert Penn, with that frank and easy cordiality, which no one knew better how to use, and which went direct to the heart, when so called forth.

He found the house and appointments sufficiently handsome to suit even his ideas of grandeur and magnificence. At dinner he was introduced to Mary Penn and her lovely family, and inwardly owned, there was no fear of lacking the

luxuries or the beauties of life in the abode of his new acquaintance.

The first month passed rapidly on. Horace, if not industrious, was agreeable and well behaved ; and Robert Penn, if not pleased, strove to be satisfied with his young friend, often calling to mind the very different views with which he had been educated.

It was during this month, Horace wrote to Fitzallen, expressive of his happiness and satisfaction ; — yet frequently, the perfect familiarity with which he found himself accosted, by persons he considered wonderfully his inferiors, and the total absence of respect or deference visible in all he associated with, disgusted and offended him.

He had read and talked much of man's equality, liberty of sentiment, and freedom from restraint, — raved of the untutored savage, and denounced the customs and shackles of civilised society ; — but like many others, Horace relished

the precepts better than the practice. The shackles of society were necessary to be worn by all who approached him.

He now began to experience, that equality, liberty, and all its democratical train, suited better the desperate fortunes of a swindler, a leveller, or a rebel, or the rising one of a man whose father and mother had better be forgotten, — than with the man of high family, unblemished reputation, and noble parentage ; — and this simply, because it is more pleasant to ascend than descend ; and that those characters, who having neither principles nor stability on which to exalt themselves, would fain pull down others to their own base standard. — This, cried Horace, they shall never do, — I walk as a god among this set of beings, — and as a god, firm in my own individual strength, will I stand.

Among the society he met at Robert Penn's, there were few with whom he could converse, — few, indeed, beyond

the pale of quakerism, which in Philadelphia is an extensive one, — and he began to be weary of bills of lading, and debtor and creditor accounts in the morning; and sicken at the sight of sober drab, straight caps, cropt hair, the plain language, and simple manners of the evening.

“*Poulet bouillie toujours le même poulet bouillie,*” said Horace, as he turned with disgust from the noiseless party in Mary Penn’s drawing-room, and heard, almost with sensations of delight, that a person was enquiring for him below.

“Well, my fine fellow,” exclaimed Macdonald, as Horace entered the room, “how are you? I began to fear those folks at New York would keep me until you had sickened, and left this abode of all that is stupid and queer; — but tell me, how do you find old sobersides and his family.”

“*Terriblement ennuyante,*” replied Horace. “I have been longing for you

Mac, I assure you ; — do pray tell me, are there any creatures here, with whom a man of sense and family might associate with pleasure ?”

“ Ah, ah, ah ! — I’ll show you, Horace, lads of spirit, — men free from cursed prejudice, — living while they live ; not dragging on a joyless state of vegetation, like your good friend, nor stewing in a conventicle every seventh day ; but enjoying nature, — living freely, according to their habits, inclinations, or desires ; following the impulses implanted in them, to render this otherwise gloomy life, a happy delightful state.”

“ Faith, then, Mac, the sooner you do this, the better : if I stay here much longer, I shall infallibly get a lock-jaw from yawning.”

“ To it, then, my boy, with what appetite you may,” replied Macdonald, as, taking his friend’s arm, they sallied out in search of pleasure ; — of all searches, the most bootless. Happiness neither confined

to space nor time, must be found an inmate of the bosom,—in the whispers of an approving conscience, or cannot be found at all. In the haunts of vice, of revelry, of noise, of empty heartless mirth, its counterfeit may be found, but the gaudy, smiling mischief will prove only a deadly poison, creeping slowly through the veins, and leaving behind it the most deadly venom. No friendly voice was by to whisper this to Horace; but if there had, his evil genius, in the person of the riotous Macdonald, would in all probability have drowned the small still voice of friendship.

From this night Horace was but seldom to be found with the respectable and excellent family with whom he ostensibly lived; by his new companions he was rather overpowered than charmed, or charmed than satisfied. They were of all nations,—and truth obliges us to add, the refuse of all nations: their evident low birth, want of education:—in

some, strong but ill-used abilities ; in others, a want of even this poor recommendation. Their violently democratic principles, and rank infidelity, frequently revolted the high-born Horace ; but his old styptic with which to stop the bleeding wounds of pride, was applied, and did not, as many quackeries do, lose its powers by constant use : “ I walk as a god among them ; ”—and so he did, like Lucifer among the fallen angels,—grand in his fall, majestic in his ruin ; but every day took something from this grandeur : the constant collision of base metal wore away the gold and brightness of a mind already tarnished ; and neglect added rust and soil to the mouldering waste.

Thus passed on three months, when Friend Penn began to show something more than silent discontent ; and Horace failing in respect, began to use language and manners, from which the pure minds of Mary and her children shrunk with horror.

It was after several offensive expressions used at breakfast, that Mr. Penn addressed Horace with, "I sadly fear, Friend Horace, thou hast made choice of some very bad advisers and acquaintance since thy coming to this place; if thou wouldst bear to be advised by one who wishes thy welfare, it would be that thou shouldst directly break off thy idle pursuits, and recollect the purpose for which thou didst cross the seas."

"I am not likely to forget that, sir," haughtily replied Horace, "and must beg you will not interfere in my pursuits or associates: they are those of a man of sense and liberal sentiments, and such as occupy and interest me."

"The pursuit that should occupy and interest thee, Horace, and which must do so if thou continuest here, is the business of our counting-house," calmly replied Robert Penn.

"D—n it, sir," fiercely began Horace; but was suddenly stopped by the mild com-

manding tone and manner of Friend Penn, who, raising his hand, said to his wife, “ Mary, send thy children from the room ;” then turning to Horace, — “ in my house, young man, ‘ Thou shalt not swear,’ is a command that *shall not* be broken : it is copied from an old book, with which, I fear, thou art not very conversant, but which thou wilt find on the book-shelves in thy dressing-room : go now and study it, for thy future conduct ; and when thou hast done so, I shall willingly converse with thee again.”—So saying, he took his wife’s arm, and quietly left the room to the sole possession of the chafed indignant Horace, who in these three months, had made a rapid progress in the arts of infidelity, and now bid fair to rival his most advanced instructor, even the immortal Paine himself.

With the book Robert Penn alluded to, he had never been very well acquainted, but since the early days of his excellent mother’s mild instructions, or the less simple but equally honest ones

of Maggy, it had been totally neglected, and might have remained on the shelves in his dressing-room as long as he occupied it, without disturbance from him, or even a knowledge of its being there, had not curiosity, now excited by Mr. Penn's remark, induced him carelessly to examine the volumes which composed his little library. Among them, there was nothing that fostered his pride, nursed his self-will, fed his baleful principles, or ridiculed and abused religion ; of course, all was flat, tasteless and insipid, and the hasty peep of their contents once taken, the volumes were again consigned to dust and forgetfulness.

Soon after this, a severe cold and slow fever confined Horace for some weeks to the house, and his amusements chiefly to those the kind and cheerful family of Robert Penn could procure for him, which were those calculated to interest, occupy, or instruct a rational thinking mind, and sometimes had the effect of beguiling even Horace of weariness,

spleen, and impatience. Several of his new acquaintances called frequently on him, charitably as they said, to prevent his expiring of vapours.

Edward Acton, a young man of some respectability, the son of an English settler in the Savannah, but dreadfully bitten with the mania of the times, had been talking for an hour, in enthusiastic terms, of the glory of the French Revolution, then in its infancy, — the folly and stupidity of submitting to be governed by kings, blinded by priestcraft, or tyrannized over by popery.

When he was gone, Mrs. Penn enquired who he was, and from whence he came. — “And dost thee know his parents?” asked she, after Horace had satisfied her first enquiries. Horace replied, he did not, nor had ever seen Edward Acton more than a dozen times.

“Why then dost thee permit him to use the freedom of a very old friend, in talking folly, and sometimes more than folly to thee?”

“ Is talking folly, then, my dear madam, only the privilege of a very old friend,” asked Horace, with a smile.

“ It is kind and charitable, Horace, to bear with the infirmities of an old friend; but from a new one, I do think thee shouldst require a little plain sound sense, and some respect to the law that bids us honour the King.”

“ Why, surely, madam, you are not the advocate of kings and taxes, — a native resident of a free country.”

“ I am, Horace, their advocate against every species of disrespect. If I value this country for being free, who have I to thank for its prosperity but the very grants from a king-governed country, for settling and colonizing it. Do thee learn, my young friend, to be submissive to the powers that be; and instead of railing against governments, or in praise of an infatuated, mad, rebellious people, let every one strive to mend one, and things will improve daily. Now, after all this

talking, do thee try to sleep a little. I should be sorry to see thee worse in any way, so will nurse well thy mind and body, if thou permit." So saying, she darkened the windows, and quietly left the room ; but Horace could not sleep : his mind was in a state of chaotic darkness and disorder : a new and turbulent passion had taken possession of it, which Mrs. Penn undesignedly contributed to strengthen.

Robert Penn's family consisted of a valued wife, and four lovely children : the eldest, Charles, was all his parent's fondest wishes would have desired ; the next was a fine, noble looking, tall dark-eyed girl, firm in her principles, steady in her conduct, modest and affectionate in her demeanour, and now on the point of marriage with a young man, equally the choice of her heart and judgment ; the third was a soft-eyed beautiful creature, just bursting into womanhood, " unstable as water ;" her face, the bright resemblance of an April

morn, always clothed in smiles or tears, and frequently in both.—In character she was nothing, she may become any thing, but it would require the utmost care and attention to mould her into that degree of subdued, placid, yet active sweetness, for which her mother and sister were remarkable. The danger she was in of becoming the very reverse, was imminent; and an acquaintance with the world was to be dreaded, and desired for her. From an acquaintance with a young man such as Horace Fitzallen, Mrs. Penn apprehended no kind of evil : she thought the delicacy of her Esther's mind would start with affright from sentiments such as he boldly avowed; while it was just possible Horace might improve by being in the society of innocence.

Soon after Horace became an inmate of the family, Esther one day expressed a wish to study German; and Horace immediately solicited the pleasure of becoming her teacher, and soon after com

menced his lessons with of all pupils the most docile. The connections he afterwards formed, for a while drew off all attention from his new and interesting employ ; but during a long period of feverish debility, it had again been resumed with redoubled pleasure.

There was, in the innocence, the freshness, the unsettled *gaieté-de-cœur* of Esther, an attraction, a fascination irresistibly dangerous to Horace. While leaning over her shoulder, to watch the progress of an exercise, or looking in her cherub face, to give the just pronunciation of a harsh guttural word, Horace often became bewildered ; the subject was lost in the object ; and pressing his hand against his forehead, he would close his eyes, as if to shut out an object too dazzling. At such times Esther, with the sweetest grace in the world, would lay her soft white hand on his, and kindly say, “ do not thee read any more, my poor friend Horace, if it makes thy head

ache ; — there, lie back in the chair, and I will read to thee.”

The matter became worse ; and, starting, he would mutter, “ Fool, fool that I am ; ” and again try to resume his lessons.

Esther soon began to read freely.— Gesner’s beautiful and pathetic Death of Abel drew tears from her azure eyes ; and Klopstock’s Messiah roused her enthusiastic feelings to sublimity. — But Horace was not satisfied, — he wished to awaken other feelings ; and for this purpose, he gave her Kotzebue’s Dramatic Works, and the far-famed Sorrows of Werter.

These were bold steps ; — and Horace was indebted to an unknown language for such inflammatory trash ever meeting the unexperienced eyes of Esther Penn. But the gilded bait took in a great degree : Esther read, wondered, blushed to ask an explanation ; — read again, — met the bright eyes of Horace

with less confidence than usual, — sighed, and fancied a new world open to her view.

Horace left the poison to work its own way ; secretly exulting, that its effects were sure, and he hoped not slow.

After a few days, Esther ventured to ask her instructor, if there were indeed, in Europe, such persons as those she had been reading of ; or if they only lived, like the characters in Holy Writ, many ages since ?

Horace could scarcely suppress a smile at her simplicity, as he replied, “ there were many such persons in Europe ; ” adding, “ and I hope to find some such in America, dear Esther.”

“ Dost thee ? then I am sorry for thee, poor sick Horace ; for there are none such here.”

“ Do not say so, dear girl. — In the very retired life you have led, you do not know what beauties of nature and mind your country may boast.”

This was the first time Esther had ever heard her life called a retired one, or fancied there were beauties she knew not of, to be found in a more extensive range of society ; but she now first recollected, that not quite all in Philadelphia were Quakers, and perhaps, among those who were not, this kind of people were to be found of whom Horace and her book spoke.

Something of this kind escaped her, which Horace failed not to nurture for his own purpose ; — though what that purpose was, beyond rendering her dissatisfied with her quiet lot, he as yet knew not himself : — he fancied himself in love with Esther, — but to marry her, appeared *hors de question* : — it neither suited his free-thinking principles, nor Robert Penn's prejudiced old-fashioned ones ; — yet, what to do he knew not.

These agitating emotions retarded his recovery, and called forth all the kindness of Mary and her daughters, until

Horace fancied even the bitter pill of matrimony must be swallowed, rather than lose the lovely Esther.

Yet her father's prejudices,—nay, not only her father,—both parents, sister, brother, and a whole host of relations; beside the almost excommunication of the society to which they belonged;—these were obstacles it was impossible to get over.

Against this, he would often oppose the motherly and unceasing interest of Mary Penn, in all that concerned his health and comfort, and the fond expression of Esther's words, eyes, and manners at all times, with the young consciousness he began to discover in those artless eyes and manners.—But marry a Quaker;—no, the thing was impossible,—she must renounce all that;—and self-love whispered, the sacrifice would not be very great.

In six weeks, Esther had made great progress in her studies, and they were

more than the study of German, — they were directed toward every word and motion of her handsome teacher, and through him to the world.

Horace had likewise made great progress; he had taught himself, or nursed in himself, an overwhelming passion, that threatened to bear down every thing before it; and had the principles of Esther been as fixed as those of her sister, such a passion might have proved his present and eternal salvation; but, as is usually the case, Esther learnt of him, and strove to bring her principles and feelings in unison with his,—she began to love Horace, and to doubt the truths of her Bible, at the same time.

He at first ventured to smile at her admiration of the Death of Abel; then led her to doubt the fact, then proceeded to reason with her on the absurdity of believing the tale of Adam and the Fall; and at last brought her to acknowledge, it was certainly a very improbable

tale. This was sufficient ;—but the same day gave him further proof of his pupil's advancement.

“ How goes on the German, Esther ?” asked her father, at dinner.

“ Thank thee, father, I believe pretty well, friend Horace does not complain of me.”

“ Perhaps he would not think it polite to complain of his pupil ; Europeans think much of this artificial grace. But what book dost thou read in ?”

“ I have read Gesner's Death of Abel, father, and Klopstock's Messiah :—I am now to read his Letters.”

“ I fear thou wilt hardly find it worth thy labour of learning ; for it will not afford thee many books.”

“ Perhaps not, father ; but when I have finished Klopstock, I will read Philip Melancthon's writings, and these will more than repay my labour.”

Horace heard this, without being quite sure that he loved Esther the better, for

thus rapidly falling into the crooked paths of dissimulation. He fancied she ought to have acknowledged all she had read, even at the risk of incurring displeasure; so true is it, that the most vicious admire virtue in the female sex; and he that twists the supple mind aside, will be the first to point out its deformity.

But the first barriers were now broken, and Horace began to talk of love, to instil scepticism, and breathe of passion.

Esther became infected with romance, and industriously read Rousseau alone in her chamber, — smiled and blushed when Horace called her his *petite* Emilia, Sophia, or Julia, until, without an end in view but the mutual indulgence of passion, they had wove around themselves and each other, a web of deceit, error, false reasonings, wild unsubdued feelings, mistaken hopes, and bootless desires.

Horace was perfectly recovered, but he no longer found pleasure out of the house; and Martha's approaching nuptials occupied much of the family's time and attention, giving to Esther but too full an opportunity of listening to, and learning of Horace.

Nothing can be more true, than that the best of people are the most easily deceived; possessing themselves a constant desire to do right, perfect rectitude, and the charity which "hopeth all things," they do not suspect the art that clothes itself in apparent candour, or the smiles and kindness meant but to mislead; — judging of others by themselves, and by that rule with which they would be judged, they put the fairest, most pleasing construction on actions, that persons less free from guile, would discover the evil and true source of.

Thus it was, Robert Penn, a close and shrewd merchant, and a keen observer of every thing connected with it,

was as a husband and father indulgent almost to a fault. Entertaining the most perfect affection for his wife, and the highest opinion of her judgment and care in the conduct of their children, he contentedly left them to her management,—satisfied that when Mary smiled, he need not frown.

The degree of order, neatness, propriety, and good government visible in the family, as well as the superior attainments and excellence of the young people, justified this fond decision ; and nothing less than the demoniac spirit of the first tempter could have been so bold as to break in on the peace or innocence of this family Eden.

Certain it is, that nothing was further from the intentions or desires of Horace, who sought only the gratification of those feelings, he said, nature had endowed him with, and would have started with horror, ready to exclaim, “ Am I a dog to do this thing ? ” had any one

but hinted such a fear to him ; — but man's *own* strength is perfect weakness.

Satisfied with seeing Horace occupy a place in the counting-house, or at the dinner-table, and talk or read the evening contentedly away with Mary and the family circle, Robert Penn asked no more ; — comforting himself by hoping a love of commerce and a spirit of industry would appear in time.

Mary, free from guile as human being can be, did not for one moment suppose, that the long translations Horace helped her child to make, and the long conversations carried on in an undertone between them, contained an idea or breathed a thought offensive to the strictest rules of morality ; — happy in seeing others so, she quietly pursued the path of active duties and religious avocations.

Horace no longer seemed to exist than when in the presence of Esther : — the hours that an undefinable sense of fear

and shame kept him engaged from her, hung with a listless weight upon his hands. When the hour of dinner advanced, he flew rather than walked to the house, sure to find Esther alone, at least for a few moments, who, become an adept in the art of contrivance, always found means thus to obtain a mutual indulgence. She would smile innocently in his face, call him her "dear Horace," and talk of passionate love in the garbled language of wild romance and the sweetest tones of unsuspecting childhood.

Time flew rapidly on:—Martha Penn was married; and her affectionate mother, during the first months of Martha's wedded life, was much occupied by nursing and attending her through a tedious and debilitating nervous fever. Charles was gone to the West India islands on pressing business; Lydia, the youngest daughter, was easily amused, or

kept in the nursery; and poor Esther, left to herself, to Horace, and temptation,—listened, believed, loved, trusted, and fell!!

CHAP. II.

THE day before that on which Captain Escott made application to Sir William Fitzallen for the honour of his daughter's hand, Sir William, at the house of a friend in Cork, met the Earl of Eastbrook, with whom he had long been slightly acquainted.

The Earl, after some introductory conversation, solicited for his son, Lord Bayfield, permission to address Miss Fitzallen; — “his lordship,” the Earl said, “was a man he felt proud to call his son; but a farther acquaintance would, he hoped, develope his character, and obtain for him the entire affection of Miss Fitzallen and perfect esteem of Sir William and family.”

Nothing could be more agreeable to Sir William than such a proposal ;—fortune, he knew, was of no consequence,—Lord Bayfield was an only son, extremely rich, of unblemished reputation, and a firm adherent to the Church of Rome.

Elated with what he considered Isabel's good fortune, he returned the next morning, to prepare her for a visit from his lordship ; but some secret misgivings that Isabel was already attached, and a consciousness that should this be the case, she would firmly refuse to see Lord Bayfield, and perhaps assert her right of choosing for herself, determined him to leave Lord Bayfield to make his own way, and merely announce to Isabel that the Earl and his son would dine with them the next day.

Such an intimation could not make Isabel suspect who the man was her father expressed himself ready to receive as a son-in-law ;—they had both visited occasionally at Fitzallen, and to all the

kingdom was Sir William's hospitable mansion known and welcome.

To the Abbé the good Baronet, in the openness of his heart, made known the offer of Lord Bayfield, and received from him sincere congratulations, and at the same time, a positive command not to allow her the power of refusal : — the Abbé said, he was shocked and outraged to see Fitzallen become the home and resort of heretics and infidels. He rejoiced in this opportunity of snatching Isabel from their influence, and strenuously advised, with the authority of a command, that should she be so unmindful of her duty and interest as to refuse Lord Bayfield, she should be immured in a convent for life.

He likewise insisted, that Emma should be immediately recalled, and forced to a resumption of her religious duties, and a breaking off all acquaintance and connection with heretics, which, the Abbé declared, had risen to such an enor-

mous weight of sin, that he daily expected some heavy judgment to overtake the family.

Such a conversation was very agitating to the fond and easy father, who was much more anxious to see his children happy, than particular about the means they took to obtain it, — provided it did not immediately strike at his religious creed.

Scarcely had the positive and angry Abbé left his patron, than a message was brought from Captain Escott, requesting an hour's conference.

Sir William returned an answer, desiring to see him in half an hour. Conscience whispered the probable nature of the Captain's conference, and fearful of trusting himself, he again sought his constant guide; and from him received the most positive injunctions, should the bold heretic dare to make proposals for a daughter of the true Church, to refuse him; and under penalty of the bitterest

anathemas, to forbid him the house for ever; and the Abbé artfully contrived to work on the prejudices and fears of his patron, by contrasting the difference between a rich peer, firm to the only true Church, an Irishman, and a neighbour, and a poor soldier, an arch heretic, disowned by God, and not esteemed by men, — a hated Englishman, and a wanderer.

Thus prejudged and condemned, the open, unsuspecting George Escott, glowing with love, confidence, youth, and manly beauty, entered the private library of Sir William, who receiving him with his usual cordiality, betrayed no appearance of expectation or resentment.

Escott soon unfolded the cause of his visit, and in manly, animated terms, declared his passion for Isabel; — a passion, he said, generously returned, and now become a part of his very existence.

He described in energetic language

the struggles he had encountered with his feelings; in endeavouring to extinguish the warmest, brightest flame, that ever glowed in the heart of man, before he could reconcile to himself the desire of making so much worth and loveliness the sharer of his humble fortunes and unsettled home; — that, finding this impossible, and blest with an interest in his adored Isabel's affections, he entreated the consent and blessing of her parent on their union.

Sir William heard him thus far in silence, when the smothered thunder broke forth:—the worst of the Baronet's fears had not reached a tenth part this length:—to hear Isabel, the firm, unmoveable Isabel, had given her heart to a poor soldier of forbidden country and religion, at the moment prospects the most brilliant were opening on her, was agony, distraction, madness. He accused Escott of duplicity, art, meanness, villainy, in thus stealing

into his house under the mask of friendship, abusing his hospitality, and destroying, body and soul, his greatest treasure.

Escott was naturally passionate, and his blood boiled at these vile accusations ; — but it was the father of Isabel, and he checked the rising storm, and pleaded in his defence, the beauty and attractions of her he loved ; which he must have been more or less than mortal to see so often unmoved.

Sir William reproached him with his poverty, his country, his religion ; and finally accused him with inheriting the dishonourable spirit that had marked his father's early days.

This was too much, — Escott revered his father's memory, and warmly, resolutely defended it from every aspersion ; — at the same time telling Sir William, he had little cause to talk of honour, who had allowed him to love his daughter, and then refused her without cause. — But even a father's rights had bounds,

and they would be happy in defiance of him.

Sir William became outrageous ; — he swore, if Isabel ever saw or spoke to him again, she should that hour be sent from her home for ever ; and at all events, unless she consented to become the wife of the man he had chosen for her, and who did her the honour of preferring her, within a month, she should be immured for life in a convent, — for the wife of Captain Escott she never should become ; — he would rather put a period to her life with his own hand, than she should live to disobey him.

Captain Escott loved Isabel too sincerely to hear this any longer ; — his head grew giddy, his heart sick, and without well knowing what he did, he took up his hat and reeled out of the room.

While the groom was saddling his horse, he stood leaning his burning temples against the wall, without one dis-

tinct idea. Isabel, in the gloom of a convent, swam before his disordered imagination. With the feeling of a man flying from some dreadful danger, he mounted his horse and galloped furiously into Cork.—There his kind friend, Major Delville, found him stretched on his bed, with throbbing temples, burning hands, and wandering intellects.

Sir William's nervous system had suffered considerably by the agitating events of the morning, and conscience, who would make herself heard, reproached him with encouraging the visits, and overlooking the marked preference of a young man, who must prove a dangerous object to an unattached and warm-hearted girl, and to whom he never could, never would allow her to be united.

While these thoughts were working with frightful violence on his brain, two letters were brought him, the one from his youngest daughter, the other from his good friend, Joseph Hammond.

In hope of meeting something to divert his mind from its present painful subject, he opened the letter of Joseph Hammond.

At first reading, its contents were unintelligible, — “ Emma having made her decision in favour of ‘ Friends principles,’ it was the desire of himself and family that she should for the future reside with him entirely, and consider her future provision his care,” — he could not understand it ; nor after three readings even suppose, that by “ Friends principles,” it was meant to say, she had abjured the Roman Church.

With a confused idea of something very unpleasant, he opened Emma’s long and explanatory letter. She spoke of her conviction of the errors of the faith she had been educated in, — the abuses which had crept in among the holiest offices of the Church, — her conversion to the Protestant faith, and embracing the principles, simple manners,

dress, and habits of the Quakers, with an explicitness, and a respectful but firm decisive tone, very unusual to Emma, but that left not a shadow of doubt that her determination was finally taken. — She concluded by saying, that as light and darkness never could coalesce, her future residence at Fitzallen would not be at all desirable, — she therefore wished to continue under that roof where her mind had been enlightened with gospel truth.

Sir William read this climax to his miseries with feelings that mock description ; he continued to gaze on the words that appeared written in characters of fire ; — but their connection was gone, — until, losing all recollection, he fell senseless on the floor.

In this situation he was found by the gassoon, who went in for the purpose of putting fuel on the fire, and the boy not doubting but his master was dead, ran first to the priest and then to Isabel,

with the information that the life was out of the master quite.

Monsieur l'Abbé possessed considerable medical skill, and being in some degree prepared for the state in which Sir William was, hastened, with every thing necessary to facilitate recovery, to the chamber of his patron, and entered it at the same moment Isabel and Mrs. Selby came in by an opposite door.

Poor Isabel was not likely just then to be a pleasing object to the angry Abbé ; he rudely pushed her off as she attempted to raise her father's hand, muttering some indistinct words, in which "murderer," alone reached her ears, and ran with an icy chillness through every vein.

Sir William was raised from the floor, and carried to his bed in an adjoining room, where the priest proceeded to open a vein, and take such other measures as usually restore suspended animation ; — but he soon declared the

attack to be apoplectic, and beyond his skill.

Mrs. Selby's penetrating glance had before discovered this, so that already by her active kindness, a messenger was on his way to summon the best medical attendants.

Isabel continued to gaze with fixed eyes and features deadly cold and pale on the inanimate body of her beloved father, but nothing could draw from her a word or tear; and Mrs. Selby began to entertain serious fears for her reason, when two physicians of eminence were announced: — they immediately pronounced the Baronet's illness an apoplexy, caused by some sudden shock.

The malignant grey eyes of Du Bois were directed fiercely at Isabel, but she saw nor heeded them not. She comprehended that her father was to be kept quiet, that he already breathed, and might possibly recover with care. She felt that a bolt of ice had struck her own

heart, and that the hand from whence it came now lay powerless. But to the reproaches, sarcasms, and obscure hints of the Abbé, she was perfectly senseless.

Towards midnight Sir William breathed freely, and opened his eyes several times, though still without recollection. Mrs. Selby now strove to persuade Isabel to take a composing draught the physician had ordered for her, and go to bed. But in vain; — Isabel smiled bitterly, laid her hand on her heart, put back the offered potion, and closing her eyes, lay back in the chair she was sitting on, and continued to sigh heavily. Grateful to discover even this sign of returning sensibility, Mrs. Selby quietly took her station on the other side of the bed, and urged her heart-struck friend no further.

Seeing all tranquil, the Abbé seated himself by the fire in the outside room or library, and began to read the letters he had taken from the floor. Soon their contents reduced him to a state of the

most pitiable phrenzy :—Mrs. Selby hearing his groans went hastily to him, and alarmed at the distended eye and livid countenance he presented, she quickly unloosed the ligatures that bound his forehead, throat, and wrists, and sprinkling him freely with restoratives, she began to chafe his hands and temples, when, recovering recollection for a moment, he furiously roared, “accursed heretic, viper,” and pushing her from him with a violence that made her reel, gnashed his teeth, in speechless rage. Mrs. Selby collected all her presence of mind, and calmly regarding him a few moments, plainly saw it was passion alone disordered the frantic priest.—For such maladies she had no pity, but such as every true Christian will feel at sight of the deforming power of sin.

Drawing near the table to get her gloves, the well-known characters of Emma and Joseph Hammond met her eyes; a few words she could not help reading, served

to throw light on the sudden disorder of Sir William and the Abbé : summoning a Catholic servant to the aid of the latter, Mrs. Selby returned to her poor friend Isabel ; inwardly breathing a fervent prayer that her mind might be restored to soundness and a sense of her imperfections, and her dependence on a power superior to mortal, be fully manifested to her soul's eternal benefit.

Towards morning Sir William slept, and awoke with some faint appearance of recollection. Judging the sight of Isabel would prove too agitating without previously preparing him to expect her, Mrs. Selby led her to the next room, and whispered the Abbé to attend his patron.

The watch and gloves of Captain Escott still lay on the table where he had left them : — Isabel, in passing, recognized the well-known watch, and catching it to her heart, sighed bitterly,

and groaned rather than uttered, "it is here, — but where art thou, my love?"

Mrs. Selby thinking any thing better than this death-like stillness, told her Captain Escott was in Cork, attended by his friend, the Major.

"And ill?" said Isabel, in a hollow supulchral voice.

"Very ill," solemnly replied Mrs. Selby.

"What then do I here, — who shall detain me from him?" said Isabel, wildly.

Mrs. Selby replied by leading her to the door, and pointing to the closed curtains of her father's bed, from whence issued his faint and murmuring groans; — the appeal was understood.

Isabel tottered to a chair, and covering her face with both hands, wept long and convulsively without interruption, until the priest advancing, stood before the agonized girl for some moments in silence, then crossing himself, addressed

her with “ Why weepest thou, wretched daughter? Is it that thou hast grievously offended against the most Holy Church, by conversing with and encouraging atrocious heretics; or, that thy wicked sister has so far forgotten what is her duty, as to write her intention of quitting the holy guidance of her youth, and searching among the wilds of heretical apostacy, a crooked and accursed path for herself?”

The last words only met the ear of Isabel: — raising her large distracted eyes, she hastily said, “ accursed! — of what, — of who are you speaking?”

“ Of all those who quit the line of duty,” sternly rejoined the priest, — “ among whom, oh daughter, thou art nearly reckoned:—one only way remains, — abjure all thy false notions, discard thy heretical acquaintance, and unite thyself in marriage to the man thy father shall select from the only true Church.”

“ Leave me,” groaned Isabel, “ tor-

ment me not now; — for myself I will choose, and by myself stand or fall.”

“Then fall, miserable girl, — but no, against thyself thou shalt be saved,” vociferated the angry abbé, and retired muttering, “this very day means must be taken to save her from destruction.”

Sir William continued to recover slowly; — the abbé never left him day or night, but had a small bed brought into his chamber, on which he slept, without taking off any part of his dress, conscious how essential tranquillity was to his perfect recovery.

Mrs. Selby succeeded in preventing Isabel from being more than a few minutes at a time with her father, and that but seldom.

Major Delville wrote frequently, but at the end of a week had not left Captain Escott, who still continued extremely ill. — The next day he intended being at Fitzallen, though he dreaded quitting his young friend, for even a short time,

fearing a report, now become very general, should reach him, namely, that Lord Bayfield was the accepted lover of Isabel. He entreated Eliza to find out, if possible, what foundation there was for the report, and, should she think it prudent to mention it to Isabel, to do so without the abbé's knowledge.

Emma had several times been to her father's house, though the priest absolutely forbade her going beyond the reception room, until she was restored to a sense of her duty. To bring about this desired end, he exhorted her, threatened, implored, prayed, and cursed her : — to all, Emma was firm, immovable as a rock, — her character at once appeared to have acquired strength, decision, and resolution : she implored on her knees to see her father, to entreat his forgiveness, and crave his perhaps dying blessing : — this she was refused with the bitterest anathemas, unless she would recant. Emma prayed aloud in agony, for blessings and mercy on her father,

but declared herself ready to suffer all that had ever been suffered by Protestant martyrs, for the faith she had embraced.

Seeing her thus immoveable, Isabel raised her from the ground, pressed her to her aching heart, and bid her go in peace, and rest assured, on the word of one who *never varied*, that should her father be really in danger, no priest or devil should prevent her seeing him. — Emma thanked her sister, and regardless of the foaming abbé, they affectionately bid each other farewell, Isabel promising to write daily.

“ Shall I call on any friend in town for you, dear Isabel,” said Emma, as she was quitting the room.

“ No, thank you ; — leave me to my fate ; it may be a painful one, *but I can and will* bear without shrinking whatever may happen,” returned Isabel.

From this time Emma was not permitted within the gates ; but to them she came daily.

Major Delville paid a short visit, answered Isabel's questions, saw Sir William's physicians, and received a favourable account of their patient; implored his Eliza to be careful of herself, and again departed.

The same evening a note was brought to Isabel; the characters were uncertain, but dear to her heart, she hastily tore it open, and found the following words:

“Isabel, I am rejected, accursed, and banished by your father,—sick and worn down by fever and disappointment,—say, is it possible that you reject me also?—Is your father's friend, Lord ——— No, I cannot write his name. But why, adored Isabel, not one line? Soon as I can quit this room, I will hear my fate from your own lips, or die in the attempt at your feet.”

Isabel's emotion amounted to agony; but quick as her trembling hands would do it, she hastened to assure her lover of her unalterable affection,—a love, which

time, opposition, sickness, or distress would but strengthen and confirm.—She assured him, she did not even know who was meant by her father's friend, but that the heart now his, could never be given to another, under any circumstances. Alas! poor Isabel, — few were the hours longer that even this negative peace was allowed her.

When Isabel went to her father in the morning, she found him supported by pillows and his confessor. After solicitous enquiries, she was again about to retire: — “Stay, my child,” said Sir William, “I am now able to talk to you, and would wish to do so, — sit down, and listen.”

With grateful pleasure, Isabel took her seat, straining her nerves to their firmest tone, as the Baronet proceeded,—“From our holy father I learn that you are already acquainted with your sister's infamous heresy:—I will not agitate myself longer in talking of her,—she is no longer a child of

mine,—I renounce and curse her,”—Isabel shuddered, and her father, after a moment’s pause, continued, — “ I have ever found you dutiful and obedient : the few errors you have committed are rather the fruits of inexperience than of wilfulness ; but I am not now going to put these virtues to the test, — your moderation will rather be called into practice than your fortitude.

“ The day before this unfortunate illness seized me, I received from the Earl of Eastbrook, in the name of his son, an offer of marriage for you, more flattering than I could ever have ventured to hope : — had the choice of the world been offered me to select a husband for you, it would have fallen on Lord Bayfield. I have this morning received a note from him, requesting to visit you ; it is almost unnecessary to say, that permission has been cheerfully granted, and within another month I hope to hail you Lady Bayfield.”

Isabel's expressive countenance told a tale not to be misunderstood: — her father was exhausted, but the abbé took up the subject, and in an elaborate manner enforced the duty of obedience to parents and the Holy Church. When he paused, Isabel calmly replied, “Notwithstanding the state in which you now lie, my dear father, it were worse than folly to deceive you: my esteem, my high respect are Lord Bayfield's, if he continue after this day to deserve it, — more is not in my power to give. My heart and all its fond affections are unalterably another's, and I will never give my hand where my heart does not accompany it. — Expect nothing from my duty or obedience; the first, dictates the conduct I now adopt; — I acknowledge no law of obedience but such as reason inculcates; — blind obedience ceases with infancy. I now stand on equal terms; am ready to oblige, and in minor matters yield my own will from kindness;

but I expect to be obliged and yielded to in return."

As Isabel concluded, she rose from her chair to quit the room. Sir William, who had expected her positive rejection, reined in his anger, and in a tolerably composed voice, said, "You will see Lord Bayfield, Isabel, and you know what I expect."

"I will see him, sir, and you know what I shall say," was the reply.

"One word, daughter," said the abbé, "your pious father and I have determined positively, that we will save you from the wickedness you would fain commit, by obliging you either to marry Lord Bayfield, or immediately take the veil, — you have, therefore, a choice, daughter, before you."

"Which you shall not controul," replied the haughty indignant Isabel, as wrapping her long scarf around her majestic figure, she walked slowly out of the chamber.

Isabel's was not a mind to seek coun-

sel, she therefore named not any thing that had occurred to Mrs. Selby ; but that kind friend's penetration sought to find a cause for the round crimson spot that burnt on Isabel's pale cheek, and the unusual fire that flashed in her sparkling eyes.

To the enquiring solicitations of kindness, the heart of Isabel was ever open ; she related succinctly what had passed, adding, " Do not, dear Eliza, by sighs and tears, weaken my nerves ; I have need of all my strength of mind on this occasion ; but fear not, — the heart fortified with the ardent love that glows in mine, is capable of any thing."

" Oh, dearest Isabel, may you be endowed with wisdom and strength from on high," exclaimed Mrs. Selby.

" Thank you, for what you fancy an excellent prayer ; but my own wisdom, my own strength, shall be sufficient," returned Isabel, as a servant announced Lord Bayfield.

His lordship spoke with feeling of Sir William's illness; then entered on the general topics of the day, with a spirit and manner calculated to engage both ladies, and that announced a mind well-informed, at ease with itself, and desirous of standing well with others. The arrival of Major Delville gave Mrs. Selby an opportunity of retiring.

In Isabel's calm, collected, elegant manners, it was impossible one knowing little of her, could read what passed within; and Lord Bayfield proceeded, in glowing terms of high admiration, to lay his heart, title, and fortune out for Isabel's acceptance. She composedly listened until he came to a pause, waiting reply, when, with a tone of voice, manner, and expression, it was impossible to doubt, or hear unmoved, Isabel thanked him for his compliment; the highest, she said, any man could offer a female; assured him of her respect and esteem, so long as he continued *to deserve it*, —

but was proud to acknowledge her heart devoted unreservedly to the best and most exalted of men, whom she would make her husband, or die unmarried."

For this Lord Bayfield was utterly unprepared, and the more he saw and heard, the more he lamented his ill success; — he stammered something of waiting, and circumstances working a change in his favour.

This Isabel cut short, by replying, "You neither know me nor the man I love, Lord Bayfield, or you would know, no circumstances can ever effect an alteration in either of us: — some souls love warmly, and love more than once, — others love devotedly once, and for ever; of this class is mine, therefore deceive not yourself, you have my definitive reply. I do not weakly throw myself on your *mercy*, by telling you the object of my affections is of the Protestant Church, and an Englishman, hateful to my father, but I demand of

your *justice*, that you neither suppose yourself ill-used by my father, nor press further a suit which never can succeed."

Lord Bayfield answered in suitable terms and retired, bitterly regretting his disappointment, and highly approving and estimating the candour of disposition and nobleness of mind, that prompted such a line of conduct.

The day passed, and Isabel neither saw nor heard from her father. The next morning, the abbé said he was sleeping, and could not see her : Isabel, therefore, strove to employ herself ; but every pursuit had lost its charm, and she was weeping over an exquisite miniature likeness of Captain Escott, when the door opened, and the shadow of his former self appeared within it ; — in a moment Isabel was locked within his convulsive grasp, while she pressed him to her bursting heart in unspeakable agony.

Their interview was long, and full of emotion. The regiment had that morning received orders to be in readiness to march at an hour's notice. The Major was come to claim his promised bride; and Captain Escott entreated Isabel to consent to a private union, and go with them. Though unreservedly declaring her idolizing attachment, and voluntarily swearing to be united to him or her grave, Isabel would not consent to a private union; but promised to see him every day; and should the convent threat appear likely to be put in execution, to fly with him immediately.

CHAP. III.

UNUSED to disappointment, vexation, or unkindness, the fondled child of indulgence, the favourite of fortune, and universally courted as a companion and friend, Captain Escott could not admit doubt as an inmate in that bosom where unsuspecting confidence held absolute empire, nor suppose there lived a father who would sacrifice his favourite child to prejudice and bigotry. Thus the positive, harsh, and violent refusal of Sir William to his urgent suit, fell with double weight on his heart, tearing from it the wreath of smiles and flowers with which he had always delighted to deck the world at large, and opening to his horror-struck view the dark shades with

which fanaticism blackens the dispositions of her votaries. The picture struck on his nerves and senses with frightful violence, reducing him to a bed of sickness, and exciting in him a sentiment of unmingled disgust for what is generally named religion, with a determination, at any risk, to snatch Isabel from its debasing influence. During the days of his confinement, this idea possessed him solely, until it was a part of his very self.

A letter announcing the death of his mother, which, at another time, would have overwhelmed him with sorrow, scarcely held his attention for a few hours. His dutiful affection as a son had been exemplary, and his grief was deeply seated ; but the severe lessons of the past almost taught him to think death a blessing ; and as futurity, *if there was such a state*, was, he felt convinced, a state of bliss to the morally virtuous, he

was at perfect ease with respect to his loved mother.

By her death he became entitled to an annuity of 600*l.* per annum for life; and with this increase of fortune, all fears for the future disappeared.

Could he but persuade Isabel to consent to a private union, he should, of mortals, be most blest; but, without her, life was a burden intolerable to be borne. In this disposition of mind he went to Fitzallen.

Isabel's undisguised tenderness, her tears, her vows and endearments, soothed and gratified him; but a new fear now tormented his soul. In the struggle between love and duty, Isabel had suffered much; her marble cheek, bloodless lips, and trembling frame, spoke a language widely different from that her animated voice would express; and Escott trembled that the ruthless hand of death should snatch this beloved object from him also.

“ Well, my dear Eliza, when am I to lose, and Major Delville gain, an inestimable treasure,” asked Isabel, as she reclined on a sofa in Mrs. Selby’s dressing-room, after a short and silent dinner.

Mrs. Selby did not reply ; and Isabel continued, “ Nay, do tell me ; I already know the regiment is under marching orders, and that I must part with you ; let me know how soon, that I may fortify my mind to meet and rejoice in your happiness.”

“ Could you rejoice in my marriage, under your present circumstances, dear Isabel ?”

“ O, I hope so. My heart is surely not so narrowed by its own griefs, that it cannot rejoice in your happiness.”

“ And do you fancy, my sweet friend, that even my marriage with Major Delville will excuse to my conscience leaving you thus painfully situated, or that my happiness could be increased by

quitting a friend to whom I feel myself really useful."

" I do not comprehend you, Eliza ; my head is a little confused to-day, and can only understand plain facts ; — you will marry Delville, and leave me ; once again, then, I ask when ?"

" Then, dear Isabel, the plain fact is, *I do not know* ; but, most certainly, not while my presence is necessary to you, or that I can in any way be serviceable to you."

" Eliza, what means this ? Do you fear my power to sustain the coming storm, or are you becoming careless of Delville ? Say, tell me what can have produced this extraordinary intention ?"

" Merely the simple Christian desire of doing good."

" And can you, for one moment, think I will accept of this heroic sacrifice ? or that my philosophy will yield to your Christianity ? O no, dear Eliza ; I may

be wretched, but I will not be meanly selfish."

"You use strong expressions, my dear Isabel. Believe me, I find nothing in this determination heroic, or meriting the name of a sacrifice; and perhaps it may be even, in some degree, self-love; for I am not quite sure Delville would thoroughly esteem a woman who could desert her friend in distress, though it were to become his wife."

"How is it, Eliza, that, in many instances, I find in you such strong traits of philosophic forbearance, even while you adhere tenaciously to the prejudices of revealed religion."

"The thing is easily accounted for, dear girl. Religion is not incompatible with true philosophy: on the contrary, they form a part of each other. It is only a spurious quackery, dignified with the name of philosophy, that the Christian will quarrel with. The forbearance of which you speak, the desire of serving

others, humility, and meekness, are all the fruits of Christian philosophy, and without which no one can be either a Christian or true philosopher. It does not consist in occult sciences, or deep researches; but in a uniform love to God and man; a constant subduing of the wills and desires; and a conformity to the precepts and example of our great Founder. This, too, is the philosopher's stone, converting all it touches into gold. And this is religion, — a science unknown to the Humes, the Rousseaus, the Kotzebues, the Staels, the Paines, the Godwins, or the Wolstencrafts, of the past and present day."

"But thoroughly known to you, dear enthusiastic Eliza," interrupted Isabel; "but my head aches, — we will talk of this again in the morning. I will now make another attempt to see my father."

The attempt was made, but made in vain. Monsieur l'Abbe said, "Sir Wil-

liam was quiet, and had desired not to be disturbed."

Isabel entreated just to look on him, promising not to speak; but she was sternly ordered to retire, and learn obedience.

Finding the effort vain, Isabel sought her sleepless pillow, and deluged it with the tears that her strong mind enabled her to repress when with Mrs. Selby, but which were necessary for the preservation of her senses. Pale and languid, Isabel met her friend at the breakfast table next morning. — "I have been thinking," said she, "that it may be some weeks before the — dragoons leave Ireland, and as I really am perfectly well, you will still be able to keep your engagement with your lover; for it is not just that Major Delville should pay the penalty of his captain's misfortunes, and my imprudence, though you are willing to share it."

“ Major Delville,” my dear Isabel, “ knows how to feel for his friends, and to teach his own wishes submission ; — but when you are really well and happy, we will talk over this affair ; until then, consider me in the place of our dear banished Emma.”

“ You are too kind, for indeed I am quite well.”

“ Quite well, my sweet friend ! with that face of a corpse ; those hollow eyes, a trembling enervated frame, total loss of appetite, and but little sleep ! — these are not the symptoms I would fain see of health : but as your father is nearly recovered, a little air would be good for you, — what say you to a ride to Castle Horne this morning ? It is a visit we owe, and the society there is always charming.”

Isabel agreed to the proposal, and being again refused sight of her father, ordered her carriage ; the man hesitated, and then said, he would be sending

coachy. — Coachy appeared, and Isabel to her astonishment found, that orders had been given by the abbé, that Miss Fitzallen did not use the carriage or horses.

“ What does he dread ? ” said the indignant Isabel, as her servant quitted her presence. “ O, how little can they read a heart like mine ; — but, my dear Eliza, contention just now is beneath the tone of my feelings, send for a chaise and horses from the post-house, and as your guest I will go in it.”

The post-house contained a decent chaise, and one tolerable pair of horses, almost the only common decent ones in Ireland, thirty years since. Mrs. Selby considering the abbé’s commands an unwarrantable stretch of power, sent her own servant for them, and taking Isabel, proceeded on their little excursion.

During the ride, Isabel’s native pride, and recent mortifications, strove hard for the mastery, — pride at last conquered.

“To bear is to conquer,” said Isabel, as with a firm step, erect form, and burning cheek, she entered the drawing-room at Castle Horne; but the first object that met her eye, threatened to subdue all her hardly-acquired firmness; — on a sofa near an open window, wrapt in a long loose military coat, reclined Captain Escott, and sitting by him, holding his hand between both her’s, was the venerable Lady Ormesby, the excellent mistress of the mansion.

After the first salutations and expressions of pleasure on the part of Lady Ormesby were past, and the delighted agitations, which neither Isabel nor Escott could suppress, had subsided, Mrs. Selby enquired how it happened, that she found the Captain so perfectly *en famille* at Castle Horne, where she was not aware of his being even on visiting terms.

“He is not on visiting terms, my young friend,” returned Lady Ormesby, “seeing this is only his second, and

that I now detain him by force, acting under the command of his Major and Colonel, to the latter of whom I owe it, that he ever visited Castle Horne at all. You may not perhaps know, that Colonel Harrington is the only son of my late brother : his almost continual ill-health throws on Major Delville many of his duties. In discharge of one of these a month since, a circumstance so honourable to the character of Captain Escott as a gentleman and a man of feeling came to the Major's knowledge, that his Colonel, then staying here, sent for Captain Escott, to express to him his pleased approbation.

“ Old ladies you know will sometimes take strange fancies ; so what is to be said for my falling in love with a man young enough to be my grandson. I began to fear my passion was not returned, when I heard my poor Captain was confined by sickness. Trusting to the deference seventy years gave my character,

I ventured to visit him more than once, and yesterday had the pleasure of seeing him enter this room, looking better fit to enter the silent grave. In willing obedience to his commanding officers, I have since then detained him, and was, when you ladies interrupted our *tête-a-tête*, engaged on a subject that I much wish to become one of deep interest to him : — tell me, Captain, are you not now obliged to me ?”

“ More than I can express, dear madam : always exert your powers of rhetoric and restraint, when by it you can so completely make misery felicity, I beseech you.”

“ But, Captain,” said Mrs. Selby, “ are you quite aware, that our good friend had only your general good in view this morning, since a particular gratification was unknown to her ?”

“ Oh, quite ; but general or particular, *n’importe*, since by it I was detained,

and enjoy the unspeakable delight of seeing you and my own Isabel here.”

Isabel looked surprised and something confused at this conversation, which Lady Ormesby perceiving, good-naturedly said, “you see, dear Miss Fitzallen, that I have contrived to gain the confidence of my young Captain, which, after the avowal you heard me make, must be allowed to be my due. But what may, perhaps, surprise you more, is, that I am in the full confidence of Lord Bayfield, and received from him this morning a full account of all that passed between you yesterday: he is a very worthy young man, and could you have preferred him, I know no one more worthy of you. He does you every possible degree of justice, and I hope you will do him the same, my dear.”

“I know but little of him,” replied Isabel; “but if you know our conversation, you know I promised him *my esteem as long as he deserved it*, — more

I could not give, and this I conceive to be doing him perfect justice, since it neither deceived nor flattered him."

The entrance of Colonel Harrington and Major Delville put a period to the conversation. Isabel had never seen the Colonel, and was pleased with his benevolent aspect, easy address, and fine though sickly countenance. In the course of conversation he said, it was generally supposed by those in the secret, that his regiment would be sent to the East on their quitting Cork; but he hoped it would not be so, as his health would absolutely forbid his going; and with a war in prospect, to resign was mortifying to his feelings. However, continued he, it would be a fine thing for my friends, since Delville would then rank as Colonel, and Escott get a company higher. But this consolation was lost on the two lovers. — Will Eliza quit Europe with me? does she love me enough for this? — and I cannot, will

not go without my adored Isabel, were the overwhelming feelings of both.

Isabel's own convulsed frame would no longer be tranquil, and rising she went to an adjoining room, under pretence of examining some plants. Escott followed, and with agony again pressed for an immediate and private union. Isabel was still firm in refusal, though her heart pleaded for him; but she fondly loved her father, and calculating on his love for her, and his easy placable temper, she held out the belief to her lover, which tranquillised her own mind, that he would, when convinced of her unchangeableness, no longer withhold his consent to their union.

“ But the East, my beloved Isabel, I never will go there without you — be the companion of my journey, or see me die before you.”

“ Compose yourself, dearest George, our fates may alter soon; at all events hope, and rest assured I am not less a

sufferer than yourself," replied Isabel, as Mrs. Selby came to enquire if she was ready to return.

Lady Ormesby parted with them reluctantly, saying to Isabel with marked emphasis, "Remember, my dear young friend, that in any thing where an old soldier's wife can be of service to you, I am truly at your command."

Isabel gracefully thanked the kind old lady, and withdrawing her hand from Escott's convulsed grasp, jumped into the carriage, and throwing herself into the corner, gave way to a burst of agonised tears that shook her frame almost to dissolution.

Mrs. Selby could offer no consolation, her own heart was heavy and oppressed with the griefs of her friend, and the importunities of her lover. She felt all her religion, all her patience and hope, necessary to restrain her own tears, and believingly say, "All will yet be well."

They reached home before Isabel's bursting heart had gained tranquillity :

hastening up stairs, she sought her own chamber, to enjoy uncontrolled the luxury of passionate weeping: but this was not long allowed her, a message from Monsieur l'Abbé summoned her to attend on him. She obeyed the summons, reckless as to what its import might be, and found her spiritual guide extremely *enrâgé* that she had dared to go from home in a hired chaise, an indignity, he said, to the family honour.

“ I wish it were the only indignity the family suffered from the same cause,” replied Isabel, “ but the daughter of Fitzallen being refused her own carriage, is a stain of deeper dye; yet happy will it be if that prove the deepest. But this is all folly, have you done, sir, I wish to retire?”

The abbé had not done; he continued to talk long and violently on the duties of unqualified submission, unresisting conformity, and implicit belief to and in parents and priests. The sin of enquiring

and daring to think for themselves, he said, had already been punished by one of the family becoming a wicked heretic, a poor castaway ; it therefore became his duty to be more vigilant in separating her from the contamination of such associates, and securing her to the true church. He might have talked much longer uninterrupted ; Isabel's thoughts had followed the dear object of her affections ; and the distracting questions, should she consent to become his privately, or again try her once powerful influence with her father to obtain his consent, and in the almost certain event of his refusal, should she resolve to afflict her lover or her father, occupied her every faculty, and deceived the abbé into a belief that his reproof and arguments were subduing her rebellious spirit ; but in this he was mistaken, there was but one Power could do this, and of that one Isabel as yet knew nothing.

The day passed in cruel indecision, and

the night was consumed in sighs and tears; but the morning again presented Isabel at the breakfast-table, composed, tranquil, firm in her own strength, and resolved in that strength to stand.

At an early hour the Major and Captain arrived at Fitzallen, and both by the abbé's orders were refused admittance. To the Major a note was given, stating that the security of the church and family made it necessary to expel all heretics from the house; his visits must, therefore, as well as those of his friend, be discontinued.

As soon as their horses' heads were turned, and before Isabel knew the circumstance, a message was brought her from Sir William desiring to see her. Isabel, more from the force of habit than any better feeling, crossed herself, and committing her cause to the Virgin, obeyed the summons in silence.

Sir William received her embrace and kissed her pale lips kindly, then seating

her beside him, regarded for a while, without speaking, the attenuation of her majestic form, which not even the enveloping folds of a large shawl could entirely conceal: the alteration too in her perfect face, and the nervous shiverings that continually shook her, struck on his heart a pang as near self-reproach as bigotry could feel; but he would not trust himself to make one remark on any thing possible to be avoided. Clearing his voice, and striving to speak with ease, “I sent for you, my dear Bella,” said he, “to explain to me some little mistake between Lord Bayfield and you. I have a note from Eastbrook, saying, in compliance with your request, his son declines any further seeking the honour of your hand, to which is added a long rhodomontade about generosity, liberality, and the deuce knows what. Do pray explain this, my dear, as it is impossible, after what was said to you by the holy

father and myself, that you could have dared to refuse Lord Bayfield."

"I can dare, my dear father, to do every thing that is just and right, honourable or free, or that is commanded by truth and reason," replied Isabel, mildly.

"Then in obedience to all these powers, Miss Fitzallen, you must receive Lord Bayfield as your husband. It is my will that you immediately write him, saying he perfectly mistook your meaning in supposing you wished him to withdraw his addresses, and that you shall be happy to see him at dinner to-morrow, when I intend dining below."

"If you wish to invite Lord Bayfield to dinner, my dear father, I will do so in your name, but it is impossible to obey the former part of your command. Lord Bayfield was explicit, — I was the same, and candidly told him, what you knew before, that I had no affections to bestow on him, — all communication between us has therefore ceased for ever."

“ All this is nonsense, my dear Bella. — I do not wish to use harsh measures with you, or to treat you with any thing but that friendship which has hitherto marked my conduct ; therefore it is that I avoid saying any thing of your irreligious unsanctioned attachment to a base heretic, whose profession and country you know are hateful to me ; but your sacred duties as a Catholic, a daughter, and an Irishwoman, imperiously demand, that you extirpate every shade and remembrance of this vile, wandering fancy ;—that you return to the bosom of the Holy Church, still willing to pardon you, and by penance and prayer strive to expiate your own guilt, and that of your family : — this done, you will avoid all future temptation by immediately becoming the envied wife of that most superior Christian and man, Lord Bayfield.”

“ *Never, sir* : as a father and friend, I feel for you all the respect and attachment one human being can feel for

another divested of passion ; but there are some subjects on which we shall never agree ; — your religious faith is composed of forms and prejudices, fears of an unknown God, who can only be approached through the medium of saints, and endeavours to appease his vindictive wrath by pains and penance : — mine consists in adoration of a Being known in all his works, seen in all the beautiful variations of nature, — a God, all love and beneficence, who is approachable by the enjoyment we take in creation ; who is repaid when we are happy, and is served by the voluntary gratitude of the heart, without form or prejudice : — such a Deity requires not tears or penance, is not gratified by monastic gloom, Roman pomp, or Protestant simplicity ; I therefore abjure them altogether. — This, sir, is my religious faith, and that of the man I passionately love, and who *alone* I will every marry ; — more, sir, is unnecessary on this sub-

ject: unless you drive me to it, I will never become his wife without your consent, but nothing shall force me to become the wife of another."

A variety of contrary emotions held Sir William silent while his lofty, independent-minded daughter was speaking; but no sooner had she ceased, than he burst into ungovernable rage, swore vehemently she should never marry an accursed heretic, that he would place her in a convent, and force her to take the veil; that Mrs. Selby should be directly sent from the house, and no one suffered to approach that was not of the true faith. He congratulated himself on having already refused admittance to her lover and his Major; forbid Isabel leaving the house for a moment, and gave orders that all letters should be taken to him, either coming to or going from Fitzallen.

"Be careful, sir," said Isabel, rising with dignity, "not to strain the cord that unites us too tightly, or it will snap,

and be gone for ever ; do not drive me to a decisive step, that may pain you, — to reason I am amenable, to violence an enemy.” She then rang the bell, and with a tone and manner, which even Sir William felt awed by, gave orders that all letters directed for Mrs. Selby or herself were immediately delivered agreeably to their directions, and that on pain of instant dismissal, no other orders were to be attended to ; adding, as the servant closed the door, “ for those sent by either, be it my business to see them safe from unwarrantable scrutiny.” — Then bidding her father good morning, she quitted the room, and sought in the solitude of her own chamber to tranquillise her beating heart, and subdue the high tone of her feelings.

From that time Isabel endured with unshaken firmness all the tyranny, oppression, violence, insolence, and contradiction, that a narrow-minded sour bigot, under the influence of every evil passion,

yet persuaded he was doing God a service, could inflict.

Mrs. Selby resolutely refused to quit her friend, patiently bearing for her sake every degree of rudeness or insult, not daring to venture out of the house, from the fear of not again finding admittance. She was content with still preserving the privilege of writing and receiving letters, which Isabel's undaunted spirit had preserved for both.

This persecution had continued a fortnight, when late one night a letter was given Isabel and another to Mrs. Selby; — the latter read her's, turned pale, trembled, and would have fainted, but for the seasonable relief of some friendly tears; a little composed, she regarded Isabel, who was administering restoratives with a cold and steady hand, in speechless agony.

Isabel read her thoughts, and replied to them by putting into her hand the

letter just received: it contained the following words:—

“ Isabel, the moment for decision is arrived, we leave Cork on Thursday morning, our destination Madras:— if you still adhere to your self-immolating resolution, and refuse to go with me, I will quit this regiment; for without you I cannot, will not leave Europe, nor will I quit this place without again seeing you; though a host of infernals guard your door, I will make my way through them.

“ Tuesday night.

“ GEORGE ESCOTT.”

“ What will you do?” groaned Mrs. Selby.

“ The morning will decide; in the mean time I cannot talk, but observe, dear generous friend, you at all events *shall* leave me to-morrow; farewell,” replied Isabel, at the same moment pressing her quivering lips against Mrs. Selby’s cheek, and rushing from the room to hide her unbidden tears.

A night passed in tears and agony brought neither comfort nor determination. At one moment she resolved to quit her father's house, fly with her lover, and be happy : at another, to abide the pitiless storm ; but never, no never marry, nor ever enter a convent a sacrifice to prejudices her soul abhorred. Sometimes she felt angry with herself for hesitating a moment. What was this secret powerful tie that bound her to a father who had ceased to be kind, and driven to distraction the man she adored, but the very prejudice her reason condemned ; yet something was due to the unvaried kindness of twenty years, and an indulgence until this unbounded, as well as to the admonitions of her beloved mother, who invariably taught her respect and love for her father.

In sad bewildering ruminations the night passed away. At an early hour Isabel quitted her restless pillow, and seating herself by an open window, sought

to still her unstrung nerves by the freshness of the morning breeze. She had not sat there long, when the sound of voices drew her attention, and looking from the window she saw two monks, closely hooded, standing beneath it.

The conversation was carried on in a low voice ; but from the figures Isabel discovered that neither of them was the abbé. The tallest she thought appeared young, and very like her brother Florence ; but the secrecy which had been observed, and the concealment they evidently sought, chased any pleasure her brother's appearance might otherwise have given her. Florence, naturally severe and morose, would, she knew, feel it a duty to assist in any scheme, however oppressive, to prevent another member of his family becoming an apostate from his favourite creed. These thoughts filled her with a species of alarm she had not before felt, and she descended to the breakfast room determined to ask the

plain cause of this visit and the early conference, not doubting but her guests would be there.

Mrs. Selby alone was there, and her pale cheek and languid eye bore sad testimony of the vigils she had kept. The abbé sent word he should breakfast with Sir William.

“Why did you enquire, Isabel?” asked Mrs. Selby, “he never comes down, you know, since Sir William’s illness.”

“True, my dear, but there are strangers here, who I did not expect would be partakers of my father’s *dejeuné*.”

“Strangers!” faltered Mrs. Selby, “do you know them?”

“I think one is my brother Florence, but I saw them so closely enveloped in cowls, that it was not possible to determine; but you appear alarmed, Eliza, have you any thing to dread for me in visitors?”

Mrs. Selby said she knew but little, yet that little gave her reason to dread

every degree of violence would be used to force Isabel either to become the wife of Lord Bayfield, or take the sacred veil. She said her maid had learnt from a lay brother who came with them, that their visit was in consequence of a letter from the confessor, complaining of heresies and heretics in the family of Sir William.

Isabel, torn with a thousand fears and doubts, entreated Mrs. Selby to go out and meet Major Delville and the Captain, who, she doubted not, would make an attempt to see them that morning, promising to send a note by her own servant with an arrangement for seeing Escott after she had obtained an interview with her father, which she was determined to gain by not asking. Mrs. Selby, though dreading the result, complied, and Isabel, with her mind made up as to the different lines of conduct to be pursued if her father was or was not moderate, entered his library alone and

unannounced. Her sudden entrance surprised Sir William, his confessor, his son, and a strange monk in close conversation. Isabel, without apology, approached her brother, and enquired to what they were indebted for the happiness of a visit from him, he solemnly replied, "To the superintending care of your holy and ill-used confessor."

Isabel's mind was wrought to a pitch of enthusiastic feeling that encouraged her proceeding; she demanded an explanation, protested against harshness, controul, and bigotry, and roundly asserted her right of thinking and acting. The monks, shocked and enraged, protested nothing could appease offended Heaven for such gross impieties as the house of Fitzallen were guilty of, but the consecration of its daughter, and strongly insisted on the necessity of her immediately entering on a noviciate in a strict order in Italy.

Isabel sat anxiously waiting her father's

reply, but without uttering a word. At length it was determined that Isabel should, on that day month, become the wife of Lord Bayfield ; that she should write him to this effect the next day, or permit her father to do so ; that she should spend all the intermediate time not engaged with his lordship, with the three holy fathers, who would, in consideration of her youth, absolve her at the expiration of that time, on her making a most solemn oath never to hold any doubt of the infallibility of the Roman church, nor ever again to have any acquaintance or connection with a heretic ; that the choice of marrying or taking the veil should be allowed her, and until the next matin prayers given her to consider which of those she would decide on.

Isabel heard to the end, then rising from her seat, calmly asked her father if this fiat was unalterable.

“ It is, Isabel, the fiat of these holy

fathers, and therefore not in my power to alter or amend."

"Is it unalterable, father?" demanded she, turning to the abbé.

"Absolutely, daughter: now go, and by prayer prepare yourself to give me an answer at matins, and to enter on the work of penance."

"My *decision* is unalterably made," firmly replied Isabel.

"Go, go daughter, no answer," resounded from all sides, and Isabel quitted her father's presence with a presentiment she never should enter it again.

"Let me hear from you in the morning, Isabel," said he.

"Faithfully, sir;" and she hastened from him to the usual sitting-room: its spacious cheerfulness contrasted strongly with the gloom and cheerless aspect of the one she had quitted. A miniature of Escott lay on the table; the open countenance, the frank engaging smile that played round his perfect mouth, and

lit up his dark brilliant eye, presented itself in opposition to the dark contracted frown of bigotted severity she had just encountered : pressing it to her lips, she exclaimed, “ Go with thee ? yes, to prison or to death ! never, never will I forsake thee ! ” Seizing a pen and ink that lay by, she hastily wrote :—

“ My decision is made, I am yours : meet me this evening at the hour of vespers under the south garden wall, to part no more. “ ISABEL.”

This short billet she dispatched without loss of time to the post-house ; then summoning her old Scotch domestic, she in few words explained her intention, and demanded her assistance. Maggy well remembered the flight of the Lady Isabella, and bitterly weeping, implored Heaven to give a happier lot to her dear child : — any thing was preferable in Maggy’s opinion to becoming a nun, and a Protestant preferable to a Catholic ; she therefore lent her very efficient aid

with perfect good-will, and immediately circulated the report, that Mrs. Selby would quit Fitzallen next morning, in consequence of some alterations in the domestic arrangements.

Among the domestics, was an orphan niece of Maggy's, who had been bred a Presbyterian, and occasionally attended on Isabel : — her horror and disgust of every thing bearing the name of Roman, determined her on taking only this girl as the companion of her flight.

Leaving her to make preparations, Isabel sat down to write her sister ; her letter was long, candid, and affectionate ; — in it she neither deplored the hardness of her fate nor asked compassion ; but glorying in the object of her choice, and firm in her own strength, bid adieu, without a vagrant sigh or tear, to a sister fondly loved. To her father she wrote : — “ Driven by unnatural severity on the desperate expedient of flying my father's house, I have chosen as my protector

a man superior to threats and violence. I would have staid with you, but I will not be made an instrument of vices my soul abhors — *deceit* and *falsehood*. May those you term *holy*, prove your comforters in the fast-advancing day of trial and adversity, to support you under which, *alone* made me hesitate in the step I have now taken. “ISABEL.”

This finished, she took her usual place at the dinner-table : an expressive glance from Mrs. Selby spoke her knowledge of all ; but very few words were uttered by any of the party. Florence and his friend, whose order forbade indulgence, retired the moment the cloth was drawn. Mrs. Selby and Isabel followed their example, leaving the abbé and his pupils to themselves.

No sooner were they free from observation, than throwing her arms around Isabel, Mrs. Selby wept and prayed in convulsive agony ; but soon recovering herself, she described every arrangement that,

with the aid of Lady Ormesby, had been made. A Catholic priest was to meet them that night at her ladyship's house, and unite them ; after which they were to proceed by a different route to the regiment, and at the first convenient place be regularly married agreeably to the English Church.

Scarcely were these things described, than the vesper bell bid her prepare ; — every circumstance was favourable, and in half an hour Isabel was in the arms of the man for whom she had quitted her father and sister, and with whom she was to quit Europe.

Happily for Isabel, the man she thus trusted, fondly loved her, was honourable and generous. By the aid of his kind Colonel and Lady Ormesby, they safely reached London, and joined Major and Mrs. Delville the day that the Gazette announced the promotion of both ; — Major Delville to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and Captain Escott, over

the heads of many elder captains, to the rank of major. For this sudden promotion, Escott did not know, and Isabel did not suspect that the generosity of Lady Ormesby had paid an extravagant price.

CHAP. IV.

By imperceptible degrees Esther Penn learnt to doubt, and then persuade herself she disbelieved, those sacred truths it had been the care of her parents to impress on her young mind, as the sacred and sure direction for every emergency in life's uncertain path. Her daily duties were become painful, and her religious exercises irksome: the plainness of her dress and language no longer satisfied her newly-excited taste for sentiment, passion, and romance. Except when with Horace, she was restless, sad, and sometimes contradictory; the serenity of her aspect was fled, the innocent smile that had hitherto illumined her countenance, had given place to a fever-

ish expression of anxious distrust ; and a distaste for all the amusements, pursuits, and society of her father's well-regulated house, daily became more and more evident.

Mary Penn, little suspecting the poison that had entered her daughter's heart, strove to interest and engage her by those acts of mercy and deeds of charity, that so happily occupied many hours of her own useful life. Finding this did not succeed, she had recourse to every other means an affectionate and Christian mother, aided by every member of the family, could devise ; — but, alas ! it was all in vain.

Esther was become a prey (to borrow the words of an elegant writer) to that “ cool, calculating, intellectual wickedness which eats out the very heart and core of virtue, and like a deadly mildew, blights and shrivels the blooming promise of the human spring. Its benumbing touch communicates a torpid slug-

gishness which paralyses the soul; it descants on depravity, and details its grossest acts as frigidly as if its object were to allay the tumult of the passions, while it is letting them loose on mankind, by plucking off the muzzle of present restraint and future accountability;” and every thing not savouring of this, was become unpalatable and disgusting.

Horace, whose love for Esther was but that of an inflamed passion, edged on by apparent difficulty, and fed by the demoniac pleasure of overturning her unstable principles, having gained all, and more than all he desired, no longer sought with avidity for hours or moments of conversation or endearments he had been wont to call perfect bliss; on the contrary, the sight of her communicated a feeling before unknown, amounting almost to abhorrence of himself and the weak, fond, and guilty object of his decreasing passion and regretted crime.

Concealment soon became no longer practicable ; and in answer to her mother's unsuspecting kind enquiries, Esther, in the garbled language of her new-fangled sentiments, asserting her native innocence, and complaining that the prejudices of narrow minds had attached the idea of crime to impulses and passions implanted by nature, but which poor prejudices, by the influence of enlightened writers, was now daily losing ground, confessed without a blush, that she was herself about to become a mother.

O the fast-spreading influence of vice ! This girl, who, nine months before, scarcely knew that vice existed, in whose hearing a word had never been breathed but of almost sanctified purity, who for sixteen years had been instructed, by precept and example, in the ways of wisdom, who had been taught to revere the sacred writings, and take as her bright example the great Founder of the

Christian religion, now seduced, and inflamed by the asp of false reasoning, could, without a blush, announce to that mother, whose exemplary life was a living comment on the doctrines she taught, the rapid and ruinous progress she had made in the paths of vice.

Mary Penn obliged her erring child twice to repeat the disgraceful fact, before her astonished senses could comprehend it.

“How old art thee, Esther?” asked her shocked but tranquil mother.

“Just seventeen, mother; a year older than *Julie* was when she first loved St. Prieux.”

“Of whom art thee talking, child, I know them not?”

“O no, mother, thee dost not know them; they were delightful characters in the South of Europe. *Julie*, — she is often called ‘*Heloise*,’ was the most virtuous creature in the world. She married another man to oblige her

father, but always adored her lover, St. Prieux, as I shall Horace, even if, by the prejudice of my father, I must marry another man."

" Esther, I verily think that thou art beside thyself. Dost thou recollect the sin of which thou hast been guilty? that thou art an adulteress? and dost thou talk of marrying."

" Why not, mother? I have done but what Julie did: yet she married; and oh such a beautiful death as she died; wilt thee read it, mother? it is in French."

" Silence thy foolish tongue, thou lost, unhappy girl. I did hope that this sinful kind of reading would never come in the way of a child of mine. But dost thou recollect what the Scriptures denounce on sinners such as thee?"

" The Bible is, at best, very doubtful, mother. I have only obeyed the inclinations planted in me by nature, in

the indulgence of a God-like passion, and that cannot be called sin.”

Words would but feebly express the horror and consternation of Mary Penn at this infidel declaration; yet she lost not her self-command, or her confidence on a superior Power; but with mildness and affectionate argument, strove to convince her cruelly misled child of the sinfulness of sin, and the perfect truth of Holy Writ, and the avenging justice of the Supreme Governor of the world. —

“ Ponder,” said she, “ and weigh well the convincing truth of those holy prophets, by whose mouths God spake from the beginning of the world; who denounced his judgments upon Nineveh, Tyre, and Babylon of old; upon the unbelieving Jews, their country, city, and posterity, foretelling their present degraded condition 1600 years before the event. They all warn the disobedient and sinful of approaching vengeance; and the apostles since, as well as their

great Master, preach the same. ‘ *Broad is the gate ;*’ but oh, my poor child, be not thee one of the *many who go in thereat.*”

Tears, for a few moments, choked the afflicted mother’s utterance ; but recovering, she resumed, “ When all these witnesses agree in confirming the perdition of the ungodly, in words so very plain, as many that thou must well recollect, what a fatal delusion wilt thee find it, to depend upon a mere notion, a wish of thy own, a wish the vile offspring of infidelity and sin, in contradiction to such abundant evidence. Be assured, my child, the Scriptures can no more fail than God himself cease to reign : all the evil as well as the good which is there foretold must be accomplished ; and surely thou art among them, against whom everlasting wrath is denounced if they die in their sins.”

“ But suppose all thou sayest to be true,” said the weeping Esther, “ there

is no fear of my dying, I am very young and very healthy, and I am sure my heart is very virtuous."

"Away, away, sinner, with these soothing errors, thy '*heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*;' thou art not so young as thy two sisters who died, and thy present situation is one always full of danger. Awake and seek for mercy now, not a moment hast thou to spare; even now death, the offspring of sin, is bearing his commission towards thee; even now he may be at the door: go to thy chamber, weep in dust and ashes thy foul crime, and when by deep repentance thou art justified in raising thy eyes to thy heavenly Father for mercy, then perhaps will thy indulgent deceived and afflicted earthly father see and pardon thee in imitation of his Divine Master, who dying prayed that his murderers might obtain pardon."

Drowned in tears rather of weakness than penitence, dreading that her mother

spake the words of truth, and striving to think she did not, Esther sat a wretched spectacle of the blighting mildew spread by the deistical infidels of the new school of philosophy.

“Go,” said her mother, “retire before thy father comes home, I would fain tell him this trying tale myself; at night I will see thee again.”

“O,” sobbed the weeping girl, “send my own Horace to me the instant he comes home, that I may rest my aching head on his faithful bosom and gain consolation from his dear lips.”

“Peace, babbler, peace, or speak the words of truth and decency: thou hast already heard too much from his lips, now seek consolation from the unerring lip he taught thee to doubt.”

“But I must see him, mother, I cannot sleep unless I do, I cannot indeed.”

“Then watch and weep, ’twill suit best with thy lost condition; rivers of tears, without a humble contrite heart

and abundant mercy, will never wash away thy foul crimes.”

“ I am sure my heart will break,” sobbed Esther, as her mother, closing the bed-room door on her, locked it, and putting the key in her pocket, retired to seek, by meditation and prayer, fortitude to meet her beloved husband, for whom such an overpowering misfortune awaited.

Horace, bearing about with him, *malgré* his free-thinking, an uneasy conscience and self-condemning fears of the result of an explanation he knew must soon be made, hurried from one scene of riot to another, as if by speed he could escape the arrows of conscience that stuck fast in him. He no longer loved his victim and he had never esteemed her ; her fondness wearied him, and her complying weakness disgusted ; he remembered his sister Isabel, and wondered how such an unformed trifling child could have interested him for an hour : still, the

blinding power of passion removed, he acknowledged that he had infringed the rights of hospitality, and abused the confiding benevolence of kind friends. To make reparation became therefore his determination: true, by doing so, he should tie himself to a little fool he despised; but then marriage was a vulgar tie, that would satisfy all parties, legitimize the infant, and be of little if any restraint upon himself: besides this, it had advantages; it would give him a legal claim on the house, which he more than suspected his love of business never would; and though he had often exclaimed,

Oh love of gold, thou meanest of amours,
without knowing from whom he quoted, yet was he by no means indifferent to the solid comforts and many elegancies of Robert Penn's house and table; for all of which, he knew he must stand indebted to commerce and industry: the latter was *hors de question*, therefore to secure the

first and quiet all parties, he would e'en marry the pretty Esther.

Thus reasoned Horace the whole of the day, on which a discovery in every way so painful was made to Mary Penn, and by her with abundant tenderness, and all the hope her clear conscience would permit, to her husband. Animated by what he thought a virtuous and prudent resolve, Horace returned that evening, with a freer air and firmer step than usual. Hastily ascending the broad staircase, he threw open the drawing-room door. Mr. and Mrs. Penn were sitting near the fire; the book of inspiration lay open before the latter, from which she did not raise her eyes. Over the manly countenance of the father was spread a resigned and calm composure, not the birth of earthly calculations.

Esther's usual place was unoccupied, and Horace quickly discovered that something unusual filled the thoughts of his friends, but from the tranquil placidity

of both, persuaded himself it could not be the situation of their daughter. He sat a few minutes, when finding neither of them spoke, with attentive politeness hoped nothing unpleasant had occurred to vex them. Mrs. Penn took from the table some German and French volumes, and presenting them to him, "I wish," said she, impressively, "that in returning thee these volumes, I could awaken in thee a sense of their mischief or thy own blindness; but thou art, I fear, well read in their pernicious doctrines and shallow reasonings. I could have desired that thou hadst not introduced them, or the practices they inculcate, into my family; but believing this evil was permitted by unerring Wisdom, to teach us a lesson of humility, I submit, praying that thou mayest see the error of thy ways before it be too late, and be kept from repeating the crimes of which thou hast been guilty here."

Horace was totally unprepared for an attack so full of mildness and resignation; he muttered something of sorrow, irresistible temptations, passion, and overwhelming sentiment, all of which was perfectly incomprehensible to his hearers.

“I dare say,” replied Mrs. Penn, “all that thou sayest may suit well to such as think and act like thyself, or to the self-made philosophers of the world; but we do not understand it. To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly, is our endeavour, and what we require of others. Now it is plain, that thou hast not done justice to our child; thou hast not been merciful to her or her parents, and surely thou hast not walked humbly.”

“But,” interrupted Horace, eagerly, “I am willing, nay anxious to do all this. I confess my fault, but am desirous of making ample reparation by immediately marrying Esther. In a short

time the *bruit* will be over, and in seeing us happy, you will forget we ever offended."

The pale face of Mary Penn became paler as Horace concluded: turning to her husband, she said in a voice that, for the first time, trembled, "What sayest thou to this, Robert?"

Robert Penn, raising his cool, clear eyes to the restless fiery ones of Horace, demanded, "Didst thou ever read the Bible?"

"Certainly, sir, often when young."

"And dost thou remember, that as well as 'thou shalt not commit adultery,' it is there forbid to be unlawfully yoked with unbelievers?"

"I believe it is, sir; but I do not see how that can affect Esther and me, because we both think alike, and both deny the authenticity of the writer you quote."

"Before thou couldst accomplish thy bad purpose, no doubt thou didst find it necessary to lower in the silly child's

estimation every thing sacred ; but when the thin varnish thou hast spread over her crimes shall wear off, which it soon will, she will see herself and thee in the heinous light of condemned criminals ; thinkest thou, therefore, it would be insuring her happiness or thine, to unite you by a mockery of the most holy ties."

"Faith, sir, it will be something more than a mockery, it will prove sober reality; and as to happiness, my sentiments will so fully become hers, that no fears can be reasonably entertained, that the event you predict should ever take place."

"Thy arguments, Horace, but blacken thy subject ; the book thou pretendest to doubt, is the rule and guide of my conduct, and it forbids connection with unbelievers. I did wrong in admitting thee into my house ; I did farther wrong by trusting my child to thy instruction in things neither her mother nor myself understand ; but I will not add to all

this by wilfully breaking the laws of God and man, by putting her in the broad road that leadeth to destruction, and making her promise faithfully to love and honour one whose ways and principles she ought to hate with a perfect hatred. Thy wife, if I can help it, she shall never be."

"As you please, sir," replied the offended Horace; "I shall not press for the honour of an alliance with a merchant's daughter; but recollect it is the only reparation I can offer, and the only means by which you can preserve her character."

"Thinkest thou such a marriage would be reparation: would it restore the happy innocence of which thou hast robbed her; would it restore her confidence in a Supreme Judge, or her salutary fear of breaking his laws; would it restore to us a virtuous child, or give to thyself a wife thou couldst esteem, or thy children a mother, to honour and imitate?—if not,

thou canst not repair the mutual fault, or save a character already tarnished ; therefore seek not to make her thy wife, but rather seek to amend thy ways : thou mayest then be entitled to a provision for thyself, and at some future day, a wife and family. My daughter, thou seest no more.”

During this speech, Horace sât gnawing his lips in rage ; its plain truths were incontrovertible : but a conclusion so different to his expectations, that so completely cut off all hope of aggrandisement by an easy marriage, disappointed and confounded him ; and now that she was refused to his wishes, he again began to fancy Esther essential to his happiness, and accused her father of destroying their blissful prospects, clouding the morning of their days, and cruelly separating hearts united by every tie that love or nature imposed ; and ended, by imperiously demanding to see Esther, that some arrangements might be entered into respecting their child.

“ I think,” replied Mary Penn, “ that my husband has already answered thee, and listened with great patience to this thy intemperate sally : thou knowest our determinations, and that we are not given to change. There yet remain some particulars to be settled, but it is late to night, and this hath been a troublesome day ; therefore go to thy bed, and my husband will see thee in the morning. Good night, friend ; once more let me urge thee to seek wisdom and mercy while yet they may be found.”

So saying, she with her husband left the room, and sought the chamber of her daughter. But Esther's protestations that she should not sleep without seeing Horace, were, like many other fancies and false fears, groundless : like a petted vexed child she had wept herself into a sound sleep, though the tear, still glittering on her long fair eyelash, the flushed cheek, and yet quivering lip, bespoke

recent agitation. As her mother stood contemplating the lovely cherub face and innocent countenance of her polluted daughter, tears stole down her chaste cheek, to think the tempter had found entrance into the Eden of her little family so successfully ; but her hope and trust were drawn from a source which frequent application could not impoverish, and which proved more than equal to her wants.

The morning had nearly passed away in those active duties, which Mrs. Penn allowed no private feeling to interrupt, before Horace descended from his dressing-room ; he enquired for Mr. Penn ; and on being told that Mr. Penn had been expecting him at the counting-house all the morning, took his hat, and coldly bidding good morning, disappeared : “ and thus,” sighed Mrs. Penn, “ vanish all earthly feelings. I suffered my heart to become too interested in this very fine young man, and I am sorely punished

for it : let the correction have its desired effect, by making me more decided in coming out from among them.”

Horace was received at the counting-house by his injured friend with a tranquil countenance and civil greeting. He then continued, “ I have been waiting some time for thee, neighbour Horace : after the circumstances recently discovered, thou canst no longer remain a member of my family, or an inmate in my house ; it therefore becomes necessary that thou provide thyself with lodgings : it is true, that by thy conduct thou hast forfeited all right to a provision from this concern beyond thy stated salary, but I take blame to myself, as I before told thee, therefore I will pay for thy board and lodging, that of thy servant, and the keep of thy horse, until the three years from thy first coming are expired, on condition that thou attend to the business here with tolerable regularity.”

All things considered, this was rather a relief to Horace, and he cheerfully promised to provide a new abode that day, a promise he faithfully kept, and never again slept under the hospitable roof he had so abused. Poor Esther, weak and unstable, soon exhausted all her stock of phrases and common-place arguments, and deprived of her teacher and books, began to doubt their power to bestow happiness, and almost their validity. Her mother's pious exhortations gained a more attentive hearing, and the religious writings put into her hand a serious perusal, until by degrees her mind regained its wonted bias to things of a Christian tendency. Hitherto she had seen no one but her mother, who had uniformly treated her with the most indulgent kindness, patiently bearing with petulance, ill-humour, and folly, in the firm hope, that in answer to fervent prayer, her child's immortal part would be saved, though frequent fears for the

approaching event harassed her maternal feelings. Esther's youth and extreme delicacy, added to her refusal of exercise, because confined to the garden, justified those fears, and excited even in the severe and rigidly virtuous Martha, some sensations of pity for the sister she once tenderly loved ; but she yet refused to see her. Martha's standard of female propriety was drawn on the highest scale : in her opinion, nothing could wash out a stain in it. For indiscretion and weakness she had no pity, and held it almost sinful to countenance, or in any way assist, the steps of a fallen sister. The road to good and evil, she said, were set before us, and a free will given to responsible beings ; the temptations to the one not greater than the invitations to the other ; and if a decision were made in favour of vice, " touch not the unclean thing " was a positive command to Christians. Principles that infidel authors, insufficient squeamish philosophy,

or imposing deists could overturn, or at all shake, never were built on a rock, that their sandy foundations would not therefore stand: the beating flood was ages since foretold by the lip of unerring truth, who had also promised that his grace should be *sufficient* for them that *ask* it; but if the ways of darkness were loved rather than those of light, the cause was plain, their deeds were evil; and “*be ye separate,*” should sound in every conscientious ear, and regulate the actions of every upright mind.”*

To arguments such as these, the parents urged mercy and forgiveness, and to precept added practice, the happy effect of which was soon visible in the altered tone, the self-condemning language, the penitent, humble, and grateful spirit of Esther, who, no longer blinded by passion, deluded by vain wishes, or intoxicated with the

* Verbatim, lately used by a lady of that sect in conversation with the author.

hope of unbounded enjoyment, saw herself deserted, almost without an effort, by the man she had in idea endowed with every intellectual gift, as well as every grace and virtue, and to whose *never-dying* passion she had sacrificed her virtue, parents, religion, and honour ; and apparently as much forgotten, as if she had never existed : but by her plain, simple, Christian mother, watched over, wept over, prayed for, tenderly nursed, kindly intreated, fondly loved and hourly blessed, and encouraged to hope for mercy, pardon, and sustaining help from on high.

CHAP. V.

AFTER spending a short time in the delights of London, Isabel cheerfully embarked with her husband for the sultry dying climes of Asia. She had heard from her sister, that Sir William was perfectly recovered, and appeared to feel the loss of his favourite child so little, that Emma suspected he was as well satisfied with her being the wife of Major Escott, as that she should have become the sister anything of some foreign convent.

Happy with this information, Isabel wrote her father and sister on the eve of departure : — it was not in her nature to ask forgiveness even of a parent ; — upright and open in all her actions, Isa-

bel gloried in her union ; and her freedom from the thralldom of the Romish Church : the steps taken to gain a desired end, she conceived herself forced upon, and if forgiveness on either side were necessary, it was on hers. Her letters were frank and affectionate, expressive of what she really felt, and nothing more : thus, there were no fears betrayed for a long voyage and unhealthy climate, no regrets at leaving the land and friends of her birth, no *hoping* for health or happiness, nor entreaties to be the object of their affection or prayers : — all these were circumstances she thought friends or solicitude could neither add to nor take from, and it was contrary to Isabel's disposition or principles to raise fears, excite or ask interest, for the mere selfish love of doing so.

Her heart and every faculty of her soul was fondly devoted to her husband. To be his friend and companion, the participator of his every feeling, the

soother of his woes, his firm support under affliction, and the sharer of his joys and prosperity; to make his country her country, his friends her friends, his profession her pride, his sentiments and his very prejudices hers, became the fixed purpose, the one business of her strong mind and enthusiastic soul. Thus feeling, a voyage to India was an unimportant thing : — whether on the burning plains of Asia, the howling wastes of Africa, the wilds of America, the highest peak of the Alps, burning at the Equator, or freezing at the Poles, or pent up in the crowded cabin of a vessel, still Isabel would have exclaimed, “ *the mind is its own place ;*” and with her husband by her side, have proclaimed herself, what in fact she was, the happiest, most favoured of mortals.

If her thoughts ever turned towards Ireland, and often they did, it was with a feeling of pity for some, of contempt for others, who still continued there. —

Among the very few whose recollection afforded pleasure, was the venerable Lady Ormesby, and her declining nephew, neither of whom she could ever hope to meet again.

“ And why, my love, should we wish it ?” said Major Escott, in reply to an observation of this kind ; “ Lady Ormesby has spent a long life in the enjoyment of every pleasure, and in the practice of every virtue ; her green old age is as delightful as was the blooming spring of life. Surely, if there be an Eternal Being, and that *there is, all nature cries aloud*, his delight must be to reward virtue ; — and whose so great as our friend Harrington and his good old aunt ? Those are not the persons whose death should be regretted, my Isabel, who in life are pleasing, and in death lovely ; rather let us prize them while here, and think of them with pleasure when no more.”

“ Indeed, dearest George,” replied Isabel, “ I know of no description of persons whose death deserves regret, — you have just stated why the virtuous should not, — and the vicious surely may be allowed to go without. An inglorious life cannot too soon be terminated ; — no, there are not any,” — at that moment raising her eyes, she met those of her husband ; suddenly checking herself, she threw her arms around him, exclaiming, “ oh, yes, there are some whose death should be wept in blood ; who live but to show what men should be, — such should never die. Oh, my brain, — turn not that way, for there lies madness ; — with him I can endure every evil that fate may inflict, however bitter ; — without him nothing ; — no, my beloved husband, the grave that opes for thee, shall receive thy Isabel also.”

Major Escott pressed her to his heart with rapturous fondness, as he playfully said, “ Well, my own Isabel, then sup-

pose we agree to ornament a funeral pile, that I may show the Gentoo a pattern, by eagerly leaping on the pile that consumes my heart's idol."

"Pray who is envious of the Gentoo felicity of burning with dead husbands and worshipping idols?" asked Mrs. Delville, who just then entered the cabin.

"I envy the burning system," returned Isabel, "or rather would emulate those faithful heroic wives who so sacrifice themselves, and think, should the dread trial of separation e'er be mine, I must follow an example so glorious."

"And I," said the Major, "intend religiously to worship idols; but they shall be household gods, namely, my wife and children."

"But an idol is an idol still, dear Major, and even you will not deny the worship of them is forbidden."

"*Even you*, — thank you, madam, for the doubtful exception; but do pray teach our good Colonel that adoration is

a sin, — for, poor man, if I understand him aright, he is far gone in this iniquity. But here he comes to answer for himself.”

“ And of what high crime and misdemeanour do I stand charged, dear ladies? for you, I think, must be my fair accusers,” asked the Colonel.

“ Not exactly so, most noble Colonel,” returned Isabel, “ but it is said that you adore your wife, and that adoration is sinful, — *ergo* you are a sinner. Now what have you to say in defence?”

“ My defence, lovely Isabel, must be a refutation of these charges. To begin with the first; — ungallant as the declaration will sound, truth demands it, I really do not *adore* my wife; I love her far exceeding every other earthly object, but my adoration is alone due and given to a Supreme Being; and that species of adoration is by all allowed not to be a sin, — yet I must not add, *ergo* I am not a sin-

ner ; — but allowing that part of your charge, simply enquire, art thou satisfied ?”

“ Yes, indeed, good Colonel ; but, with all due submission, I still think, that adoration of the creature with whom life is to be spent, is not incompatible with the sublime ideas created by belief in a wise and beneficent Deity, who liberally bestowed all that gives to life its zest, our friends and those dearer connections, whom in adoring, we adore the giver.”

“ That is very plausible, my dear Mrs. Escott, if it were but sound ; but you will recollect it was this same Deity (I detest the word) that has forbidden any other God beside himself. Now what we adore becomes a god, therefore breaks this command.”

“ There you are, Colonel, on the old rock : were our vessel so often to strike against one, you and I should soon be of one opinion, for death would remove all

doubts, and open to us the clear certainty.”

“ So I think will life, fair Isabel: to minds so enquiring as my friend George and yourself possess, the truth will not always remain hid; we shall all yet become of one opinion.”

“ That is if you become more reasonable, Colonel, and think better of your God. The commands you quote are given as a code of moral laws, but their strict letter is impossible to be kept, neither is it required: even the best of your advocates for revealed religion, quietly, contentedly break the second of those laws, by substituting the first for the seventh day as a sabbath, (and I have heard friend Hammond assert that either of the seven were equal,) and by allowing your horses and your servants to labour: yet with true Christian inconsistency, you tremble before this severe Judge for fancied faults, or because you cannot extirpate every human

feeling from your hearts, and become more or less than mortal. O, do rise above this fanatical slavery of prejudice, the web of churchmen to entangle fools. Think more honourably of your God, exalt him as he deserves, see Him ‘*the bountiful donor of all you enjoy*,’ not a stern frowning judge on a throne of iron.”

A summons to evening prayers now called away Colonel and Mrs. Delville, who during the voyage constantly made a point of attending this devotional duty, and left Isabel and her husband to the uninterrupted enjoyment of what they were inclined to think all the world; each other.

Isabel was particularly well, happy, and full of resources, and Escott frequently almost lamented that every day took one from those in which they were so perfectly all things to each other.

“ You will be seen, admired and followed, my Isabel; instead of this delight-

ful retirement, I shall see you, as in London, surrounded by a crowd, a thousand eyes roaming over that face and person I would fain keep like a miser to myself, yet not like a miser, for I would live but to form its happiness, to watch its every change, to anticipate its slightest wish, and adore its perfect beauties.”

“ Silence, dear flatterer, and recollect all this applies to you as well as to me ; but entire bliss, my beloved, is making us selfish ; and after all what matters where we are ? Living through each other crowds or solitude cannot affect us ; on the contrary, I shall glory in your popularity, the praise I hear bestowed on you, the admiration I know you must excite, and triumphantly say to myself, ‘ yet he is mine, mine alone.’ ”

“ With this perfect devotion of heart, my *own* Isabel, how came it that I was so near being forced out of Ireland without being able to call you my *own* ? why,

my love, did you so long hesitate on the only step left for us to take."

" True, it became the only one, but I never would have taken it had I been allowed to love you and live for you in peace; not from the weak fear of its being unfeminine or improper, nor because my whole soul was not yours, nor from cold notions of duty and obedience to a father; no, nothing of this kind could affect me, but because I foresee the time will come, and shortly come, when my father will need a friend: the rapacity of that low-born O'Neil, in whom he so blindly confides, will not be satisfied until he claims Fitzallen as his own. Were I then with my father, my industry, clear head, and unsubdued spirit, would save from the wreck somewhat to support nature; the selfish *gourmand* l'Abbé Dubois will not outstay the delicacies in which he delights. I would have staid with him or have brought him to you, for uninfluenced by that vile cormorant

priest, he would soon have yielded to our wishes. And judging of you, my best beloved, by myself, I feared neither time or absence ; nothing, I knew, could ever extinguish that love which was become the vital principle of my existence ; and I felt equally confident of existing for ever in your heart. My father is old, and twenty years of uninterrupted indulgence had strong claims on my justice ; but when the only alternative became legal prostitution, and with oaths my soul abhorred, or a convent's useless dreariness, where, in monotonous idleness, and prayers which from my lips would have become blasphemy, I might have lingered out an inglorious unworthy life ; to hesitate longer was madness, and my decision was that of nature, love, and justice, and one which will form the glory and delight of my active happy life."

Major Escott felt that his lovely wife had, at least, secured him happiness, and as he held her to his swelling heart,

mentally vowed that no part of his future conduct should ever cause her to repent for one instant her decision in favour of love, nature and justice.

During the last fortnight of the voyage Mrs. Delville suffered extremely from long confinement and a low nervous fever, that required better medical aid and different provision than it was possible to procure, after an unusually lengthened voyage. Nothing could exceed the indefatigable attention of Isabel to her languid friend ; who, however differing from in many essential points, she truly loved and esteemed. Often as she moistened the parched lips, or wiped the damps from the pale forehead of the patient sufferer, Isabel thought her already sublimated, and fitted for the heaven of which she spoke with so much certainty and satisfaction.

“ Surely,” said Isabel, “ if this be a delusion, it is almost an enviable one : how calmly she speaks of death, of a

separation from her husband, from all that life promises ; and with what patient sweetness submits to pain, fever, sickness, confinement, and indifferent nursing. There is certainly something in this description of Christian very alluring, if all were like her. But no ; the generalities are such as the abbé, my brother, poor old Maggy, and many English that I have seen. Eliza owes all her superiority to a natural sweetness of disposition and an excellent understanding. It is easy to talk of distant evils : she does not really think she shall be taken from Delville by the relentless hand of death ; if so, nothing, oh nothing, could give her composure or perfect resignation."

In contemplations such as these, Isabel spent many hours by the side of Eliza's couch when too weak to bear conversation, reading, or the society of more than one person.

From Major Escott, Delville received every kindness that a feeling heart and

good disposition could offer ; but something more than this was necessary to support him under an affliction rendered particularly heavy by the bereavements of his early life, the recollection of which weighed down his spirits, and gave to every increase or variation of his beloved wife's disorder the dreaded appearance of approaching dissolution. From her own lips, and from the ample resources of religion, he drew comfort, hope, and some little resignation, but anxiously longed to get her on shore, the heavy dews and hot suns forbidding her being carried on deck for more than a few minutes at a time, and that but seldom. At last, to the inexpressible pleasure of all on board, land appeared in sight, and as if the very sound was life to her, Mrs. Delville from that moment began to revive.

As they sailed up the Hooghly, the many straw-covered huts, resembling much an English hay-rick, of the peace-

ful Hindoos, and now and then a white mosque, glittering through the dark foliage which ornament its beautiful banks, called forth feelings of admiration, pity, respect, and regret, in the bosoms of the little party who watched from the deck the lovely passing scene. As Madras appeared in view, emotions of pure gratitude deluged Mrs. Delville's sickly face with tears. Her husband tenderly dried them, as he whispered, "what if this warm climate should disagree with you, my love? How shall I bear to see you ill, — how reconcile to my own conscience bringing you from home, friends, and relations? And if, — but, oh, Eliza, that I dare not dwell upon, — you surely will be spared to my prayers; and forgive my selfishness in making you a participator in all the inconveniences, to say no worse, of an Asiatic station."

"I think, dearest Delville," replied his smiling wife, "we were equally selfish; for I could not have borne to be

separated from you by the vast ocean. My health will probably improve fast ; but should it not, we know in whom we trust ; and believe that our trust will not be in vain."

They landed at Madras just at the close of the hot season, and before the rainy one had set in. Isabel, who had a large house in the White Town, soon became known and noticed by every European family for many miles round. Her extreme beauty, her majestically elegant figure, her graceful, easy deportment, her singular independence and self-collectedness, together with the sumptuous style of living she immediately adopted, gave to her *entrée* in the Eastern world an *eclât* and consequence but rarely attained.

A very short time served to render her perfectly *au fait* of the manners, customs, language, and laws of the country she now considered as their future home. In receiving her luxurious indolent

guests, or in paying visits in a style equally luxurious, and but little inferior in indolence, though marked with more graceful elegance, the active, ardent Isabel was no where to be traced. But when from the broad flat roof of her house she contemplated the starry concave, so peculiarly beautiful in Eastern regions, or the wide expanse of water that stretched below the town, in the society of her husband alone, she was the same lofty-minded, enquiring, high-souled Isabel he had known and loved in other climes. With him her indolence disappeared; she would converse on nature, its beauties and delights, — on sentiment, honour, passion, and philosophy, with all the ardour, confidence, warmth, and energy, which marked her opening character, until Escott would catch her to his generous, affectionate breast, and bless the day that gave him a prize so rich.

Mrs. Delville, happy in daily improving health, and in a peace of mind that

passeth show, fully occupied in pursuits that at once filled her time, engaged her attention, and improved her awakened mind, was but little known, and less seen, among the gay circle of Madras and its neighbourhood. Her manners required she should be known, to be valued ;—duly appreciated, she was sure of being sought : but her sphere of action was a domestic one, around whose narrow limits, the mild chastened lustre of her conduct shed rays of heartfelt light, bliss, animation, and comfort.—Content with her lot in life, satisfied that her choice of a husband was such as promised her a guide, a friend, and a kind companion through life, and who, like herself, was a candidate for immortal happiness, she neither asked nor expected unclouded sunshine, unbounded felicity, or that rapture of delight, on which Isabel would often expatiate, and in which she declared her life did and ever would pass.

“Prize it while it does continue, dear Isabel,” said Mrs. Delville, in reply to such a declaration; “enjoy to the utmost your blessings; but do not speak confidently of the future, or create to yourself such idols, as will force omnipotent mercy to strip you of them. Rejoice with trembling; always keeping in mind from whence your comforts flow, and how easily they may be recalled, — to say nothing of their fleeting nature, and the account you will one day assuredly be called to give of your stewardship.”

“I remember,” returned Isabel, laughing, “to have read that one of the prayer-making worthies, of your own church too I think, who certainly do not make such havoc of their knees and marble pavement as the Roman church devotees, prayed all night ‘*Noverim te Domine Noverim me.*’ Now, my dear Eliza, you and this saint something, would have agreed wonderfully, for your constant cry is, ‘*Beware,*

Isabel, the future, the future,’ of which you never tire :—something like the man who roamed round Jerusalem with an incessant ‘woe, woe, woe.’ But as Jerusalem, after a long time, did indeed become woeful, perhaps you will acknowledge the simile, without giving me credit for a happy thought. And you recollect how much our sailors hated croakers, so do not, dearest Eliza, croak at me every time we meet.”

“Lest I make you hate me — is that it, Isabel?”

“No, indeed, with all your prejudices and nonsense, I owe you too much, and love you too well, ever to hate you; but it is just possible to tire of stubbornness, even in those we love; and this reminds me of the purport of my visit here this morning, which was to tell you I have received letters from Ireland: — one from Emma says my father is well, and through her sends his forgiveness and blessing, but dare not himself

write, being forbidden by his spiritual director to write either of his heretical daughters. Emma has been permitted to see him twice, but he will not forgive her departure from the true church ; and it was certainly the strangest decision a woman of sense ever made. Her long letter breathes the self-devoted spiritual Quixotism to be expected from a hero of crusade, rather than the meek, quiet, simple Emma : there is a something in all this I cannot understand, but that fanaticism is the self-same intoxicating draught, whether administered by a monk of La Trappe, a laborious crafty Jesuit, Martin Luther, or Joseph Hammond, and has on its victim the effect of the potion we are told of, which made those who swallowed it fancy themselves no longer men but gods, walking through the air, and covered with eyes that penetrated every heart. Thus Emma, no longer timid, gentle, and retiring, preaches to me with the high dictatorial voice of

superior sanctity, professes to read my soul better than I can myself, and fancies she is become immortal. But you shall see the precious production of our would-be saint ; perhaps its dogmas may be more intelligible to you, than they are either to the Major or myself, to whom she might have written the Sanscrit as intelligibly.”

“ Every thing relating to your sweet sister will be interesting to me,” returned Mrs. Delville : “ she has not chosen the path I could have wished ; but if she has followed the leadings of conscience, she is right in her decision, and from the uncommon alteration apparent in her character, I expect great things from her future conduct.”

“ She was never created to perform great things, Eliza, depend on it ; *mais quoi qu’il arrive*, I wish her well. We shall see you at dinner to-morrow, and your nonpareil husband. Adieu.” So saying, Isabel reposed her tall recumbent

figure in an elegant palanquin, and was borne away, leaving her friend to regret that such first-rate talents should be so miserably abused. The dinner, to which Colonel and Mrs. Delville had been long invited, was given by Isabel to what she called a select party in the English fashion, but her evening was to be graced with all of rank, fashion, or talent, Madras could produce. It was her first display, and to excel in grace and elegance her determination; nor was she disappointed: in beauty, taste, *manière*, sense, and accomplishments, Isabel was pronounced unrivalled by all those whose fiat gave distinction.

“Is it possible,” whispered Colonel Delville to his wife, as his eyes followed Isabel, “that this finished woman of fashion, this easy collected creature, who issues her commands with the smiling authority of an Ottoman princess, and receives the homage of men of every nation and clime, as a tribute due to

superiority, was never a hundred miles from her own home, in a rude corner of Ireland, and accustomed to scarcely any society but Irish Catholics all her life; was never among the grace-seeking crowd of St. James's, nor even *brought out* at that minor seat of elegance, the Lord Lieutenant's court."

"It is even so," returned Mrs. Delville; "with this exception, her society has not been so confined as you appear to think. Sir William's house and table were open to many beside Catholics, though not his friendship or intimacy; yet Isabel frequently astonishes me, so perfectly a woman of the world, so thoroughly at home in this place, and so *au fait* of every person and circumstance. But who is that now speaking to her? do pray observe the solicitude and eagerness he displays in his address."

"That, my dear Eliza, is one of the most dangerous men your friend could possibly make an acquaintance with: spe-

cious, insinuating, deeply versed in poetry and modern philosophy, thoroughly well bred, and totally void of moral principle, Lord Tredegare would wind his way into the very centre of an ingenuous heart, and poison its inmost core. With the finest flow of words, the sweetest voice, and the most irresistible manner, he utters the vilest sentiments and most blasphemous opinions. I declare, I hardly know if to Escott or his wife he will be most injurious."

"Let us hope that to neither of them very so : they have both good sense, and a high degree of rational religion, with a proper feeling of every moral duty."

"A poor foundation, my love, for the waves of temptation to beat against. But here he comes : shall I introduce him ? we were college friends, though he is some years my junior, and a sort of acquaintance has hitherto been preserved between us."

Lord Tredegare here joined the Colonel, and was introduced to Mrs. Delville. "What poor blind devils we lords of creation are," said his lordship. "I came to this place as a man goes to Botany Bay, because he is obliged, and reckoning every day as it passed as one less of transportation. When could I have dreamt, that the most remote possibility existed of meeting here, after a long probation, such superior enchantresses as Mrs. Delville and her delightful friend, to say nothing of many other ladies. I would have come hither as to a paradise of Houris, nor envied Mahomet himself. How Delville did you and Escott contrive to fish up two such rare pearls from old Erin's rocky coast; do pray give me the recipe, for I begin to weary of a bachelor's life."

"Agreed, my lord," replied the Colonel; "when you are on the wing for Ireland, I will give you my recipe, if you promise faithfully to pursue it."

“ Is it pursuable, fair lady ?” said his lordship, “ or must I yield in despair, and submit to my hapless lonely life.”

“ I am no advocate for yielding to despair,” replied Mrs. Delville, “ and certainly think, in most cases, to aim at excellence is to attain it. The Colonel, I dare say, will not infringe his usual moderation, nor give you impracticable rules for the attainment of happiness.”

“ Not happiness, dear madam, exclusively, but a handsome angelic wife is the thing I am searching for.”

“ Then I fear we can do but little for you ; the battle is your own, and the honour will be yours also. But who have we advancing ? here is beauty to charm the grand sultan, youth and apparent goodness ; there, try your chance.”

“ No, no, fair lady, beauty, mere beauty, soon palls on the sense, fades in the eye, and, become familiar, shows defects : it is mind, soul, taste, sentiment,

a something that would hold my entranced sense in a perpetual whirl of delight, fill my soul, and make me feel alive to a new world of passionate love and rapture:—this is what I want, what I long for.”

“ Adieu, then, to my recipe,” said the Colonel, “ for this is a disorder it cannot cure — nay, cannot touch : it is calculated to administer peace, quiet, content, and rational happiness ; but knows nothing of entrancing, enchanting, rapture, or passion.”

“ Now do pray cease prosing, my sober Colonel, and turn your eyes this way ; observe that charming creature. Of all men in the world, Escott is the most to be envied. I swear, if I thought his wife liberal-minded enough to marry me afterwards, I’d shoot the handsome lucky fellow. Now see how she looks down on that swarm of insects that buzz about her.

“ Thus stood the majestic mother of mankind,
“ To her own charms most amiably blind.
“ On the green margin innocently stood,
“ And gazed indulgent on the crystal flood;
“ Survey’d the stranger in the passing wave,
“ And, smiling, praised the beauties which she
“ gave.”

“ At present,” said Colonel Delville,
“ my friend Escott, justly proud of his
amiable wife, finds his house a perfect
Eden; so may it ever remain, free even
in this land of serpents from the glitter-
ing intruder.”

Mrs. Delville complaining of fatigue,
drew near the lovely object of their con-
versation, and bidding her farewell, added,
“ I do not know if to envy or pity you
this sultana-like adoration, crowd and
heat: but you look pleased, so I suppose
you will not like pity?”

“ No pity, dear Eliza; when I sink to
pity, forget and despise me, as I shall
myself. No, no! Pity and Isabel must
never be coupled.”

“ But are you not fatigued with all this state ?”

“ *Toute au contraire*, happy, gay and delighted. See that you do not quite eclipse me in appearance at your *début* ; in enjoyment, you cannot. Adieu.”

CHAP. VI.

THE days of prosperity and pleasure fly swiftly, and if their track be not deeply stained with vicious folly, they,

Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a trace behind ;

or, at utmost, but an occasional shade of varied hue.

Isabel had now been four years in the East ; its luxuries, its indolence, every thing but its senseless idolatries were become hers. She was the mother of two lovely girls, and as much the idol of her husband's soul as at the moment she quitted her father's house with him. Of that father she seldom heard, and never from him : her sister Emma was become of a straight sect the straightest, was married to John Hammond, and with him resided

in Philadelphia. Why they had removed Isabel knew not. Anne Hammond had abjured her sectarianism, and was now the wife of Lord Dunmore; and Mrs. Delville said that they were among the most religious and happy of the sons and daughters of men. But Mrs. Delville's ideas and those of Isabel differed on the subjects of religion and happiness if possible more than ever; and both pursuing their own path they seldom met but in public, and there not frequently.

Four years had improved Isabel's opening beauties into confirmed loveliness, and her scepticism into every thing but downright atheism. She took an active and decided part in the subject of the French revolution, was openly and undisguisedly a revolutionist, an enemy to the influence of national religion on the conduct of men, and a warm admirer of the many French heroines of the day: among these, the suffering and high

souled Madame Roland was the particular object of her high panegyric. Not an account of any description of this unfortunate woman reached the East, but Isabel obtained and admired it: she talked of, read of, and thought of her, until she fancied every lineament of Madame Roland's face, form, and mind, as well known to her as those of her own husband; and next him and her infants, she ranked in her affection this interesting martyr to revolutionary madness.

Such sentiments were not quite in character with the wife of a British officer; but Isabel appeared to have established a charter, by which she said and did with impunity, what in another would have been considered highly indecorous and improper. Thus, when in a large company of chiefly military men she heard the detail of Madame Roland's heroic parting with her husband, mock trial, and immediate death,

she clasped her hands in ecstasy, exclaiming with uplifted eyes, " I felicitate thee, dearest madame, in a death so worthy of thy glorious life ; I almost envy thee the privilege of leaving such a bright example to admiring nations."

Nothing was talked of but the beauty of those hands, the sublimity of her countenance, the fine expression of her eyes, and the loftiness and animation of her soul. Escott, as usual, was envied, and his wife applauded. In one only thing was Isabel uncontaminated by the prevailing loose opinions of the day,—she still held marriage a sacred holy tie; and, with the exception of those continental contracted marriages, in which the consent or affections of either party made no part of the bargain, having never been solicited or desired, she would admit of no alienation, no wandering or infidelity. By many of Isabel's friends, particularly by Escott's particular intimate Lord Tredegare, this adherence to an old-

fashioned prejudice was laughed at, ridiculed and reasoned with ; but Isabel, who always drew her conclusions from her own feelings, was here immoveable, always asserting that no female could perfectly love two men, and no one ought to marry without loving perfectly.

This inconsistency with the liberty and reason she professed to worship, passed very well in the beautiful Mrs. Escott, whose every word, look, and movement, it was the fashion to panegyrisé and imitate. Toward every other connection she had made wonderful advances in philosophical coolness, neither of them scarcely ever occupying a thought or care. A letter once a year from Horace was nearly all the correspondence held with relatives once so dear : but the Poles were not more opposite than Emma and her sister in sentiment and opinion, and as both always spoke from the fulness of the heart, no pleasure could be felt or bestowed by letters on either side, which,

by a sort of mutual tacit agreement, were discontinued after Emma had left Europe.

Sir William never wrote : but through the medium of Mrs. Delville Isabel occasionally heard he was well, and with this was perfectly satisfied ; observing, that as he had broken all the ties that subsisted between them, and had deliberately given her up to chance, she was no longer under any obligation, or owed any gratitude but to chance alone, for the colour of her fate, which, by giving her a strong mind and superior mental abilities, had enabled her to maintain a high position in society, and force her own way through every difficulty.

Her husband and children were household gods : on them she lavished the most unbounded fondness ; saw in them no shadow of fault ; elevated them above mortality ; and to have spared them suffering or affliction, would heroically have placed herself before the wheels of the five-storied temple, that contained the national idol Jagernaut, and for her

dearly prized idols, have paid a willing sacrifice of life.

The first interruption to her domestic prosperity and tranquillity, arose from an accident Major Escott met with on a hunting party. Among the favourite amusements of the Major, tiger-hunting claimed a superior place. Though this dangerous diversion often distracted the doating heart of his wife, she had never permitted her womanish fears to find words. Conscious that her slightest wish would become his law, she restrained herself from abridging his pleasures, by not manifesting the most distant apprehension. But on this morning she found it particularly difficult to do so ; she was near her third confinement, and the father of her children became daily more valuable in her estimation. As he bid her adieu, the unbidden tear started, and the almost convulsive pressure of her arms for a moment alarmed him ; but receiving a smiling assurance that she

was perfectly well, only a little unnerved by the warm weather, he reluctantly obeyed her, and joined the hunters, though the tear-dimmed dark eye of his too tenderly loved Isabel floated before his mental vision, and often tempted him to turn his spirited Arabian and resign the chace.

After some hours of laborious sport, at the moment of exulting success, seeing one of the party struggling hard with an enraged and plunging horse, he flew to his assistance, and succeeded in rescuing him ; but in the moment of rescue, received from the animal a violent kick, the agony of which caused him to drop the reins, and instantly fall from his seat. Lord Tredegare, for him it proved to be, raised him, and with the assistance of some others, who just then came up, contrived to form a sort of litter, on which they bore him towards the town. The hour of her husband's usual return

was long passed, and Isabel vainly strove to overcome her anxiety, when an unusual bustle on the stairs drew her attention. She was flying towards it, when her maid hastily arrested her steps, and closing the door, entreated she would sit down and be calm.

“I am perfectly calm,” said Isabel, with frantic eagerness: “now this moment tell me what has happened.”

“Not much, my dear lady,” said Maxwell, “only the Major a little hurt.”

“My husband hurt! perhaps murdered! and I standing here!” screamed the terrified Isabel: “away, monster, attempt not on your life to detain me; who should be with him if I am not?” So saying, she rushed with frightful haste to the bed-room of her adored husband, nor could the united persuasions of those present prevent her going to him.

Escott had by this time recovered his senses; but the agony that contracted

his fine open brow, and the deadly paleness of his countenance, gave to his dreadfully alarmed wife the idea of death alone. She threw herself by his side, and in terms of distracted endearment, entreated him to live for her; for nothing should induce her to outlive the dearest object of her soul. Escott faintly smiled away a groan, and pressing her to his wan trembling lips, gave fond assurances of rapid and perfect recovery.

The surgeons now entering, requested Isabel would retire while they examined the state of their patient's wound: this she resolutely refused, declaring it to be her intention to remain day and night in the room, and be his chief nurse and attendant. Her own surgeon, with the others, opposed this resolution in the mildest and firmest manner, giving the fatigue and her situation as strong reasons why the very attempt would be improper.

“ And who so proper to endure fa-

tigue," returned Isabel, "as the wife of his bosom ; who can so tenderly, so fondly watch over him, as she whose very existence is woven in his ? Oh ! you know nothing of love such as I feel ; pray proceed in your operations, I am perfectly tranquil." But the convulsive shaking of her frame, and the unsettled wildness of her eyes, spoke a contrary language.

"Be persuaded, dear madam," said the eldest surgeon, "and retire while we make the examination ; your presence will agitate the Major, and probably prove of the most disastrous consequence to your husband, your child, and yourself."

"Go, my life, my soul, go from this trying scene," faintly murmured Escott. At this instant, Mrs. Delville, who had heard the report, entered the chamber, and adding her persuasions, founded on its being the desire of the sufferer, Isabel at last yielded to the only argument that could have prevailed, comply-

ing with her husband's wish, and suffered the kindest of friends to lead her from the room.

Major Escott's wound proved to be one of great danger, and requiring the utmost skill. The flesh was torn from the inside of his leg in a dreadful manner, and the bone fractured in many parts. Could he be kept perfectly quiet, and free from fever, his medical men entertained hope of a perfect recovery; but if an access of fever took place, amputation at least was certain.

This they communicated to Mrs. Delville, at the close of many hours attendance, requesting she would tell Mrs. Escott all she thought necessary, and keep her as much as possible from the Major: but Mrs. Delville, knowing the determination and strength of Isabel's character, judged it best she should hear all there was to apprehend from the surgeons themselves. Isabel heard with forced com-

posure, and promised to be calm and quiet ; but nothing could persuade her that the presence of one so dear could do him any injury.

“ They argue,” said she, “ from their own feelings, and people in general ; but a passion such as ours, they know not, cannot comprehend.”

“ Only take care of your own health, dear Isabel,” replied Mrs. Delville, “ and all will be well ; but if by fatigue or agitation you throw yourself on a bed of sickness prematurely, think what will be the consequence to poor Escott ; he who will feel himself the fatal cause of any evil that may befall you or your infant.”

“ Fear not for me, dear timid Eliza, I know my own strength, and will not go beyond it.”

For the next fortnight, Isabel scarcely ever quitted the couch of her husband ; she anticipated his every wish, regulated

the very few movements he was able to make, smoothed his pillow, and nursed him into comparative ease. She had no fear that he would die, but his every pain wrung her heart, and every groan pierced her very soul; but a faint smile again roused it, and her idol often gratefully smiled on his tender nurse and prattling cherub girl, who was pleased to assist mamma with her tiny efforts to be useful. But Isabel had greatly overrated her own capabilities; her nursling daily grew better, and she hourly grew weaker. To hide the tears that would flow, and the nervous shivers that would shake her, Isabel consented to sleep in her own room; but sleep had forsaken her, and the agony of unreasonable fear she endured for her husband when out of his sight, soon exhausted her little remaining strength.

Mrs. Delville one evening found her in hysterical convulsions, which threatened to free her perturbed spirit from its clay tenement. Dreadfully alarmed, she in-

stantly dispatched a messenger for medical aid, who, on his arrival, pronounced it necessary to call other assistance, and not again to leave the house. Isabel understood him, and became distracted; she would not, could not yield; it would be another month ere she should expect to be confined, and before that time *would* not be ill. She wildly and imperiously demanded some strong soporific that would give her sleep and ease.

“I have not slept an hour,” cried she, “these five nights; give me sleep, and I shall be well able again to attend my adored husband. Oh! talk not of illness until I see him better; I cannot, will not, submit.”

Mrs. Delville intreated, that as far as propriety would admit, her unhappy friend might be indulged. The kind old surgeon shook his head, and retired with the physician, who administered whatever the occasion permitted, but all was vain: Isabel hourly grew worse, and by

morning was in a state of the utmost danger, and still raving for opium to stay her pain. To Mrs. Delville's truly Christian mind the sight was appalling ; — a soul apparently on the brink of eternity, hastened thither by the impetuous self-will that had refused counselor assistance, and now, without the hope that sustaineth, without a refuge, fighting against the waves, and impiously raising her puny arm against Omnipotence. The contest lasted many hours, until exhausted nature sunk beneath it, and long dead faintings succeeded to the hurricane of passion. It was during one of these that the attentive Maxwell beckoned Mrs. Delville from the room, and with tears intreated she would go to the Major, whom Miss Escott had frightened to death.

It had been among Isabel's strict commands, consistent with the plan of *reason* and *rationality*, on which her children were to be educated, that the name of

death, eternity, or God, should never be used in their presence ; and should a dead animal of any kind cause enquiries, they were to be told its instinct and reason had left it, and now it would always sleep.

On this sad morning, Mrs. Delville's maid had been piteously weeping over the little pupils of reason : and predicting with much grief of heart, that both parents would be taken from them at a stroke. As had lately been her custom, the little Clara went to her father immediately after his breakfast. " What, dearest papa," lisped the innocent prattler, " does Morgan mean ? she says my beautiful mamma is going to die, and that you papa will die, and Cecilia and Clara go to live with Mrs. Delville."

" Have you seen your sweet mamma, my darling, to-day ?" asked the alarmed father.

“ Oh no, papa, she is going to die. What is dying, papa ?”

Alas ! this is a question older enquirers have asked in vain, but never demanded of one less acquainted with the subject than Major Escott. The violence with which he pulled his bell, and summoned half his household, affrighted the artless child, who screaming, repeated her question, “ What is dying ? Is papa dying ?”

Unacquainted with violence, and without the idea of giving offence, which her parents considered a mental slavery subversive of reason, Clara's cries at her father's dreadful agitation, (increased to almost madness,) were scarcely to be pacified by Mrs. Delville's assurance, that neither papa nor mamma were dying. Major Escott seized her hands with frightful violence, entreating to have his couch carried into his Isabel's apartment. The struggle with Mrs. Delville was hard ;

her conscience loathed the slightest departure from truth, while her sympathy, compassion, and every feeling, forbid her stating the true situation of his idolised wife. At length, with many tears, she prayed him to believe all would be well, and that a very few hours would relieve the dear sufferer ; urged her own long-tried affection, and soothed him with hopes she scarcely dared admit ; promised not to quit the house for a moment day or night, and to make frequent visits from the chamber of Isabel to his sick couch ; implored him to keep tranquil, and look for support from the sustaining hand of providing goodness, who was able and willing to give every necessary aid “ to them who ask it humbly.”

“ Eliza, that I have never done,” groaned the half-dying Escott : his words arrested the retreating steps of Mrs. Delville, who again taking his hand, warmly uttered, “Then, dearest friend, do so now ; let this be your first attempt. Oh ! would

this affliction bring you to the footstool of mercy, its effects were indeed blessed : here, take my prized and constant companion ; I cannot leave you a better, and perhaps my many marks in it may assist your research : God bless it to you, and make it the word of consolation.” So saying, she put in his trembling hand a small pocket bible, and again turned to leave him.

“ Why should I take this, Eliza, I have no title to hope, from its oft-ridiculed pages,” said the Major.

“ Yes, indeed you have hope, dear Escott ; your judge is not a mortal that can err, and you are among the ‘ weary and heavy laden,’ whom he kindly invites.” With these encouraging words, and a new-born hope which she had never before felt, Mrs. Delville returned to the darkened room of her suffering, insensible friend. Here a trying scene awaited her : — Isabel’s medical attend-

ants were reduced to the almost shadow of a hope for her safety. Another hour such as the past must, they said, exhaust the strongest constitution, beyond the possibility of surviving the still further pain and exhaustion natural to Mrs. Escott's situation.

Isabel, in delirium or not, had but one idea:—give her present ease, for her husband would want her,—it was time to go to him, she must not linger,—she would rise and go. At such times force alone could keep her from the attempt, until nature, subdued again, sunk into total insensibility. This dreadful warfare continued some time longer, when an idea seized her, that quiet compliance would soon bring relief; she might then have her bed carried to her husband's room, and remain with him continually. But too ill to think rationally, this salutary submission was frequently interrupted by sudden gusts of passionate self-will: at last, after unheard

of sufferings, a feeble sickly boy claimed her maternal care by its infant helplessness, which her own imprudent exertions had materially increased. She still held life by a very slender thread; ease of mind, quiet and unremitting care, could alone prolong the precarious gift on which the lives of her husband and infant appeared to hang. For many days and nights, the watchful, affectionate Eliza, never quitted the bed-side of Isabel, but to carry comfort, whisper consolation, and direct to better things the languid, wretched Escott. In this part of her self-imposed duty, her excellent and pious husband lent his willing and truly able assistance; he watched by him when inclined to sleep, read to him when talking wearied, and talked when reading would not interest. From the concerns of time he would gradually lead to those of eternity; point with a master's hand to its recompense of reward, its solid joys or boundless sorrows: to the refuge of-

ferred from pain, care, grief, and disappointment, he carefully and kindly directed the attention of his half-convinced, subdued, and world-deserted friend. True, cards were left, and personal enquiries were made at the door, almost without number ; but very few had real friendship enough to devote time or attention to a sickly invalid, who no longer amused by his wit, or charmed by his politeness ; and whose beautiful wife, the magnet of general attraction, no longer gave brilliancy or piquancy to the scene.

Lord Tredegare, the unwitting but certain cause of this disaster, called often, and was profuse in his acknowledgments and lamentations, while Isabel was the certain partner of her husband's room ; but when that ceased, he declared the scene became too sombre ; he pitied the *pauvre diable*, but could not sacrifice his time to such *ennuyante* scenes.

Major Escott remarked to his friend how seldom Lord Tredegare now called.

“ It is the way of the world, my dear Escott. — Your friendship was but the *politesse* of polished society ; had your case been reversed, you would perhaps have been more attentive, merely from inheriting a warmer disposition.”

“ You are severe, Colonel. I think my *friendship* for him would have led me often to his house and made me offer every consolation in my power ; as you must allow he did the first fortnight of this tedious confinement, which might well wear out the patience of every friend I have, except that of my poor Isabel, whose affectionate friendship appears to grow with every vexation of my life. Oh, I was never half thankful enough for my heart’s treasure.”

“ That may be, Major : but to return to Lord Tredegare ; he is, you know, a passionate admirer of wit and beauty, — your wife has both. While sure of meeting her, he was your frequent visiter ; — since her confinement, not one solitary

personal enquiry has this man of the world and many words made, — is not the inference plain? Cheerful society, and spending an hour in company with the most beautiful woman in Madras, not *friendship*, was the *lien* that drew him hither.”

“Doubtless, Colonel, you mean to be kind, in thus portraying men of the world; but how I am to be improved by thinking ill of those among whom I live, exceeds my penetration; I may by it become splenetic and suspicious; but in preference to this, pray tie on the mask again, if a mask it is, that hides the deformities of men’s hearts from my sight.”

“I should be sorry, Escott, to render you worse by my efforts to improve; my aim is, to induce you to seek your happiness from a higher source; — to see the world, so called, as it is; incapable of bestowing support in the day of affliction; I would fain

Allure to better worlds and lead the way.

“Forgive me, dear Delville,” interrupted the Major, feelingly, “I am already become splenetic, and even ungrateful to my best, my firmest friend, who for me and my Isabel sacrifices his domestic enjoyments, quits his home, permits his wife to do the same, to leave her dear children, and become a nurse, a comforter, and all that friend can be; — this, dear Delville, is the preaching that reaches the heart.”

“Silence, my good friend; and believe me, our professions of Christianity will fall short indeed, if our conduct does not correspond with them, ‘for by the fruit shall the tree be known.’ But here comes good Mrs. Hunter; I cannot leave you in better hands, so farewell until evening.”

Mrs. Hunter was the widow of a serjeant of their regiment; she had come out with her husband, who soon fell a sacrifice to the climate. The officers

had made some little provision for her, which, with acting as sick nurse through the regiment, secured the humble widow a comfortable maintenance for herself and daughter.

Mrs. Delville knew and esteemed both mother and child, as pious, lowly Christians ; poor indeed in the wealth of this world, but rich in that which passeth not away. The girl was fifteen, and willing to work, but the climate was slow destruction to her daily decreasing strength. Mrs. Delville had proposed sending her home, but Kitty would not leave her mother, and the mother thought the arm of Omnipotence able to save or destroy in any climate.

“ And after all,” said she, “ may be climate has nothing at all to do with Kitty’s weakness ; it is just sent to keep us humble ; and so Kitty says too,—therefore, my dear lady, if you please we’ll stay content where we be,—where

we came in the way of duty, and that is just the way of mercy.”

After this, no more was said of Kitty Hunter going to England ; but the sickly resigned girl, found herself in the almost constant, easy employ of Mrs. Delville.

When Isabel was so dreadfully prevented continuing her watchful care to her husband, it became Mrs. Delville's first anxiety to supply her place by one that might with confidence be depended on. In this emergency the kind and faithful widow appeared a treasure indeed, and was soon established by the couch of the in every-way suffering Major.

At the end of three weeks Isabel evinced signs of slow recovery, her recollection returned, and with it her anxiety. For a week Mrs. Delville kept her tolerably tranquil, by assurances of the Major's safety and progressive improvement, but imposed silence, as the only

means of regaining health or strength. Isabel obeyed at first from utter inability to do otherwise; but a few days restored some part of her wonted untractableness, although the firmness and strength of mind, hitherto her proud boast, were sadly borne down by affliction.

“ I have been thinking,” said Isabel, after a long silence, “ my dear Eliza, that this illness of mine is the most cruel stroke that ever was inflicted on a wife at such a critical moment. To be thus thrown aside, and my poor babe too, such a delicate little sufferer as it is, and my soul’s dearest treasure, confined and suffering in a thousand ways, — oh, it is indeed bitterly cruel.”

“ It was inflicted by a merciful and unerring hand, dear Isabel; one who does not willingly afflict.”

“ Mercy!” replied Isabel, in a haughty, bitter tone, “ mercy! such tender mercies are the worst of cruelties. If I

had thought even as you, before this terrible stroke, I should now spurn a hand so severe."

"Talk not in this way, my dearest Isabel; only fancy for a moment that my views are just, and think what a weight you are drawing on your devoted head; — this affliction, be assured, has some wise end in view, which though you may not see it, is merciful! — Oh, do think so, and the bitterest part will be removed."

"Yes, just as we cover children's medicine with sugar, — a sweet deception. No, no, it will not do. But it is well I do not believe in the God you talk of; seated in his high state, dealing out fevers, premature childbirths, broken bones, sickly children, and all the list of disgusting horrors; I should assuredly hate him: for believing as I do, that it is a chance stroke of blind fate, or the result of concurring physical circum-

stances, yet I struggle against, and murmur at it."

"Neither of which you would do, if you saw it as it is, — the wise dispensations of unspeakable goodness. But, dear Isabel, what would you say, to find your husband a believer in those truths I have so often urged on you?"

"Should say, that while his mind was weakened by the sufferings of his body, you and your husband had taken advantage of his transient overthrow to drag him into your prejudices; but should it be the case, when his clear expansive mind recovers its elasticity, he will throw off his new trammels, and be again the philosopher, the man of sense, the pure child of unbiassed reason. No, no, my good Eliza, this kind of missionary discipline will never succeed with us."

CHAP. VII.

SET at comparative ease respecting his tenderly loved wife, by receiving from her own hand frequent billets expressive of all and even more than all the fondness of their first married days, with reviving assurances of increasing strength, Major Escott lost all fever, fretfulness, languor, and low spirits; returned his Isabel responsive assurances, and again looked cheerfully forward to happy years of blissful enjoyment.

Seeing their friends thus far recovered, Colonel and Mrs. Delville became no longer stationary, but still frequent guests. Though Mrs. Delville longed to feel herself comfortably settled in her own sweet home again; the hope of permanent good to Major Escott from this

affliction became daily fainter; and it was awfully certain that the rebellious spirit of Isabel was only more irritated and indignant than ever.

She was now allowed to sit with her husband some hours every day, who likewise sat up a great part of the day; and nothing could exceed the gratitude and affection of both, if no mention was made of the hand from whence those sorrows flowed; or, as Mrs. Delville would have read it, "from whence those *mercies* flowed."

"Keep clear," said Isabel, "of this, Eliza, or you turn my feelings into gall. In a few years, I flatter myself mind shall have acquired that dominion over matter, that such cross accidents will never happen. But no more of your kind chastisements, useful sufferings, and such nonsense; for though I may, from the little progress I have made in the dominion of mind over matter, suffer pain sometimes, I *will* not be christianized after

your fashion ; especially as experience only proves to me the superiority of my own opinions.”

With a sigh Mrs. Delville declined further argument and persuasion, leaving to a superior power, the work she sorrowfully owned, beyond mortal aid, and to appearance, hopeless.

Major Escott sometimes suspected that himself and his faultless Isabel both were wrong ; but this conviction was too feeble to find words : and before the bold assertions and open infidelity of Lord Tredegare, the decisive language of Isabel, and the polite scepticism of the world in which he lived and moved, by degrees died away and was forgotten.

After a suffering life of four months, the little Alfred closed his pains and his existence together. Isabel here commenced her maternal sorrows : while her infant yet lived, she would talk calmly of his approaching decease, as a certain relief from the cares and troubles of a

sickly delicate existence ; but no sooner was the icy hand of death really on her babe, than the half frantic mother loudly lamented her fate, complained of injustice, and with the inconsistency that forms a part of unbelief, blamed the agency whose power she denied, accused of cruelty the Being whom she declared to be careless of the fate of his creatures, and held to her aching bosom her other children with a fearful eagerness, as if dreading the relentless hand of some unseen power would snatch them also.

From this indulgence of overwhelming grief, Isabel was aroused by new and unthought of perplexities. Since their marriage, Major Escott and his family had lived in the very first style ; their dinners, assemblies, equipage, and appointments, were all in the abundant extravagance of Eastern luxury : the value of money was equally unknown to them. Isabel, who in her life had never heard the word economy but from Joseph

Hammond, who was not considered an oracle ; nor had ever seen any one careful of expense but O'Neil and Mrs. Delville, the first of whom she thought a mercenary villain, and the second prejudiced and singular, neither knew nor fancied it was possible to live beyond her income : all her demands were ever cheerfully complied with, and as it came it went, with the most perfect ease and unconcern — her benefactions were made with a princely munificence, the natural impulse of a feeling heart and magnificent spirit.

How all this was accomplished was frequent matter of surprise to Colonel Delville, who, perfectly acquainted with his friend's income, in which a life interest was his all, lamented the unnecessary splendour of his establishment ; and had, on some occasions, so far stretched the prerogative of tried friendship, as to hint at the propriety there existed of laying up a fund for future exigencies, as well as

of providing for the education and endowing of a rising family.

These hints had always been received with perfect politeness, the Colonel thanked for his friendly foresight, and never thought of more.

The circumstances of the last seven months, with the uncontrolled expense attendant on such repeated misfortunes, now threatened the astonished couple with one more overwhelming than those Isabel had already declared unprecedented.

When Major Escott told his wife that debts to a very considerable amount, which he had no means of paying, were every day demanded, without clearly comprehending what he meant she replied — “ Debts, my dear George, what do you mean ; I always paid the people.”

“ True, my sweet Isabel ; but our late disasters have been the means of contracting many expenses, which, of course,

produce debts; and how to discharge them I do not know."

"Can you not send them to your agent, he always answers every demand cheerfully. Surely you are perplexing your dear head needlessly."

With some difficulty Major Escott made his spirited Isabel understand that the agent owed him nothing, but had, on the contrary, advanced considerably beyond what was due; that it would be three months before his annuity became due, and would not, if entirely appropriated to that purpose, pay the fourth part of their debts. He blamed himself severely for imprudence, extravagance, and even cruelty towards his dear children. "The very carriage-horses you drive," added he "are not paid for."

"Then return them, my beloved," cried Isabel, throwing her white arms around his neck, "I can well do without horses, without a carriage, without all but you! but never, oh! never again

abuse your own unequalled heart and disposition as you have just done. If there has been any extravagance, surely I am the offender, by indulging in every luxury. I, who never brought you any dowry, have been more profuse than Mrs. Delville, who brought her husband an ample fortune."

"Do not, my Isabel, unnerve me by this cruel kindness. No fortune, indeed! the riches of Peru would have been poor without you; and with you—— But words are useless, you know the heart so long your own, and can read its every emotion."

"And, oh! that I could as readily remove its every painful one; but something, dearest George, must be done. We will consult the Colonel: I expect him here to-day, and no one is better qualified to advise, or will do so more readily."

Escott readily subscribed to the good qualities of his Colonel, and felt more

proud than ever of a wife, whose affection and good sense could thus influence her to expose embarrassments, and the faults which caused them, to a man free from every species of luxury or extravagance.

This excellent and judicious friend heard the Major's confession with sorrow, but without surprise; he had long expected something of the kind, and now entered into an examination of accounts, &c. with the ardour and industry of long-tried unwearied kindness.

It was now six months since Major Escott's accident, and he could walk tolerably well, or bear the slow motion of a carriage; but it was the settled opinion of his surgical attendants that it would be very long before he would be able to ride or manage a horse, and probably never. This, at a time when the regiment was every day expecting to be sent up the country on actual service, was truly distressing: — what was to be done, if, on whole pay, he had found it impossible to

keep out of difficulties, how was he to exist on half-pay.

In this dilemma Lord Tredegare, with much circumlocution, said he had heard it hinted that the Major was about to quit the army. Should this be the case, he expressed a wish to purchase the majority, having long wished to exchange his regiment.

This was the first idea Escott had of selling his commission, and now viewed the offer fearfully, as did Colonel Delville; though he confessed, could the money arising from it be advantageously employed it would be preferable to half-pay, the only alternative that now remained.

A few days after this a gentleman, long accustomed to Eastern commerce, pointed out such striking advantages to be obtained by the proper application of a few thousands in a certain line of purchase and barter, that Colonel Delville, as well as his more sanguine friend, was struck by the flattering opportunity, they

fancied it opened, of prosperity to Escott and his family.

Isabel entered into all her husband's plans with the energy natural to her singularly marked character: she was ready to make any sacrifices or any exertions that the state of his circumstances might render advisable; though, she said, they had never in their lives purchased a thing they did not want — yet, probably, Eliza was correct in saying the indulgence of wants was the birth of new ones. She could bear and forbear as well as another, only give her those invaluable treasures her husband and children, and all else were equal to her."

On farther enquiry, the prospect of commerce offered Major Escott, appeared so flattering and attended with so very little risk, that Colonel Delville warmly advised it should be embraced; the sale of the commission was therefore immediately set on foot, and the money arising from it and the sale of Major Escott's

fine stud (the carriage horses excepted) not being found sufficient to pay off the debts and advance the sum required, Colonel Delville, whose

Generous friendship no cold medium knew,

paid the deficiency, in certainty of having now opened the door to fortune and high respectability for the cherished, though lamented, friends of himself and dear Eliza.

All difficulties now removed, Isabel and her husband were again the leaders of rank and fashion. To be the first in every thing was Isabel's ambition, and a priority seemed tacitly granted to her beauty and talents that birth and rank did not entitle her to: but humility was not one of Isabel's virtues, she placed it among what she called the tame, fretful, Christian, would-be virtues, which all drew their source from disappointed pride and little vanity.

When ready to relinquish her carriage

and half her establishment, Isabel was the same lofty, decided, high-souled character; and had the retrenchment been made, still she would have claimed and felt equally entitled to the highest place in society — would still have considered herself the first woman in Madras, and on no occasion ceded an iota of the respect due to her.

Clothed in rags or covered with diamonds, walking through muddy streets or borne in the most splendid palanquin, she would frequently say, “still *I* should be the same; it would be extraneous circumstances, not *me*, that would have altered: the mind is the standard, and that depends not on outward trappings.”

To one passion alone was Isabel amenable: it was the master passion of her ardent soul, and, like the rod of old, swallowed up all others. Had her husband been a religious character, Isabel would have become eminently so. On her first acquaintance with him she was

enquiring and anxious for truth, strongly bent towards modern scepticism, but capable of being brought into the right path by a loving and powerful hand.

The deep and enthusiastic affection she soon conceived for Escott gave him the most perfect command over her every opinion, thought, feeling, and sentiment. She would have bowed "*at any shrine for him;*" or for him, as she did, forswear the supplicating knee, the praying lip, the acts of grace and atonement. So powerful was the influence this passion had over her, that had his infidelity toward the Supreme Being led him into open vice, or an avowed disrespect for all laws, human and divine, Isabel would infallibly have adopted the same principles, and decked his most daring crimes with the names of high-sounding virtues.

To the many gay and dissolute young men in the extensive circle of her acquaintance, Isabel had been an object of speculation and illicit desire. From a

professed free-thinker and warm supporter of modern liberality of sentiment, little opposition from principle, and but a feeble sense of moral, conjugal, or maternal duty was expected : each one commenced the attack with certain assurance of success ; but Isabel was destined to overthrow all their schemes and disappoint all their calculations, without affording them even the base gratification of making a proposal inimical to chastity.

“ As well,” said Sir Harry Dashwood, as he quitted the ground in despair, “ as well attempt to undermine the Alps ; and as to a siege, that of Troy would be a plaything in comparison to it.”

Lord Tredegare still swore he would succeed — he had never yet been foiled, and a female sceptic should not teach him a new lesson ; he had patience, perseverance, and tact enough to have worn out even the chaste Penelope herself, and must, at length, succeed with the haughty beauty.

Actuated with these diabolical sentiments he rejoiced at Escott's accident, reckoning largely on the opportunities it would afford him of seeing Isabel alone, who was never to be found far from her husband's side ; but he was again doomed to disappointment. While Mrs. Escott was visible, it was closer than ever to that loved object from whom she would never willingly be separated ; and even the pleasure of meeting her there was soon at an end, and Lord Tredegare ground his teeth with demoniac rage, but ground them in vain.

The intrenchment that Isabel's entire devotion of heart to her husband and children raised around her, and her very limited acquaintance, really speaking, with the world previous to her marriage, happily hid from her the designs of the obsequious train who courted her notice ; thus she talked, reasoned, or trifled with playful ease, uttered her daring and eccentric opinions from lips

of faultless beauty and with a voice attuned to the sweetest modulations, amused herself with the glittering folds of the wily serpent, and encountered the poisonous vapour of slow seduction, more deadly than that of the fabled Upas, rendered invulnerable by one chaste absorbing sentiment.

Mr. Escott, who knew something more of the world than his lovely wife, proud of her talents — of her unequalled beauty, elegance, grace, and manner — of the approbation she every where elicited, and the admiration that followed her steps — flattered by her adoption of his every thought — by the decision and clearness of her tone — the novelty of her sentiments and the brilliancy of her wit — and relying on the purity and chasteness of her heart, knowing confidently that heart was all his own — saw with smiling contempt the petty pursuits of men who weighed others by the false standard of their own light minds.

“ Do you not think poor Mrs. Escott terribly altered for the worse since her shocking illness ?” asked Lady Conoly, of a gentleman who sat by her.

“ In what way does your ladyship think her altered ?”

“ Oh ! she is grown old, thin, and pale ; gone off her beauty quite. She was a fine young woman, but now, certainly —”

“ Now, certainly,” interrupted her impatient auditor, “ she is the most perfect piece of nature’s workmanship — all a man could wish for in wife, sister, or daughter.”

“ Of whom are you thus speaking, General ?” asked the Honourable Mrs. Harcourt, his respectable sister.

“ Of that very fine creature Mrs. Escott, who, I think, a man might be forgiven for worshipping, as it is well known her husband does.”

“ I never see her,” rejoined Mrs. Harcourt, “ without feeling a sentiment

of admiration and pity, not mingled, but struggling with each other for dominion."

"Which you are obliged at last to yield to admiration — but I understand you. She is not, by *profession*, a Christian; but you must allow her, in many things, the practice of one — what can be more perfectly so, than the beautiful pattern she gives as a wife and mother?"

"I allow her to be almost unequalled in tenderness in both these characters; and this it is which gives me hope for her. In some corner of a heart so devoted, the seed of future good I would fain hope must be concealed; but her deistical, profane principles, are disgraceful to a female; and spoil the best part of her character. One can scarcely conceive that her eldest child, the sweetest innocent that ever was born, did not know when I saw her at Mrs. Delville's, during the illness of her parents, that such a being as God existed, and had never heard the

word death in her life, until, by accident, when her mother was thought near it."

"As to that, Mrs. Harcourt, every body have a right to educate their children as they please."

"That, brother, I deny: every parent is bound to educate their children for eternity—to educate them in the Christian faith, and honestly discharge the trust committed to their keeping. We see these modern mothers very careful for their children's persons, which, spite of all they can do, will quickly fade; but grossly neglectful of their immortal persons. What account do they expect to give of their stewardship?"

"You may easily ascertain that, for here comes the smiling object of your stricture, and her lip is the unsullied seat of open truth. I wish so much could be said for all those who condemn her."

"It were, indeed, desirable; or for Mrs. Escott either, strictly speaking," replied the immovable Mrs. Harcourt, as

Isabel joined them, with friendly enquiries after gout, asthmas, &c.

“ You see,” continued she, “ I still preserve my European fashion of enquiring with a physician’s exactness after the state of my friends’ health ; and let me beg, General, that you consider it more than words of mere course, and not pay my understanding or your own so poor a compliment as to suppose lack of subject for conversation produces physical enquiries, made with carelessness, and not expected to be replied to.”

“ Whatever I may think of my own, dear madam, depend on it I shall ever retain the highest opinion of your understanding, and think any enquiry you make after the health of a gouty old man, who half his time sits groaning in an easy chair, declaring the eider down is become stones, and the softest hand in the world flint, a high honour as well as kind attention.”

“ Thank you, General. I am happy

these stony, flinty humours, never reach your friends. While our feelings torment ourselves alone, no one need grudge their indulgence, so go on, General, in your own way: enjoy the present, since it is all you are sure of."

"I hope, my young friend, you are saying more than you think just now; for, certainly, no one with half your good sense can believe it," said Mrs. Harcourt.

"Not a jot more or less than I firmly believe, madam; it is opposite to my principles to say one thing and think another. You may always venture to credit my assertions without fear of your prudence or veracity being called in question," replied Isabel, carelessly.

"But," rejoined Mrs. Harcourt, "do you not consider it a positive duty, when you hear positions advanced that conscience declares to be false and injurious to society, to correct them, or endeavour to convince of their great impropriety."

“ No, indeed, dear madam, I have not a shade of this description of Quixotism about me. So different do I think from the multitude, that to attempt the conviction you speak of, would be an undertaking to which the labour of Sysiphus were an amusement. No, no; go on wrapping your thorny mantle of prejudice around you close as you will. Sometimes I pity, often despise, but never convert designedly! proselyte making is, of all things, the most disgusting to a liberal mind. But here comes a poor man, who, with his candle, bell, and book, has compassed sea and land to make them; to him I leave you. My husband appears suffering from those warm rooms, so good night: General, farewell; you may venture a morning call soon as you please; we will not attempt to convert you to our opinions, though fully convinced they are the wisest, best, and safest.” So saying she hurried away, not waiting to hear the old General’s reply of enco-

mium, or seeing the delight with which he watched her join her husband, and soon after quit an assembly where she was the magnet of universal attraction, the idol of universal adoration, simply because she fancied the atmosphere too heated for her loved invalid.

When the regiment to which Colonel Delville belonged was ordered up the country on service, Mrs. Delville earnestly desired to accompany her husband ; but in a journey of uncertain length, and attended with many difficulties, what was to be done with her three children, one of whom she nursed : all the mother and all the wife was in alarm ; her infant was extremely delicate, to leave him or make him the companion of her journey appeared equally full of danger.

The Colonel, though distressed by the necessity of separation, thought on every account it would be the safest and wisest plan to leave them and their dear mother at Madras.

Mrs. Delville urged the satisfaction she should feel in being near him at the hour of danger, the day of battle, or when overpowered by fatigue, and the distressing anxiety she should experience if left behind.

The Colonel opposed the exposure of their children, the cruel inconvenience and fatigue she must herself suffer, and the increase of care it would be to himself. “Stay at home, my Eliza,” continued he, “and in the care of my infants and the prayers you offer in their father’s behalf, evince that pious reliance on Heaven, and that unvaried affection which has given to my life its most delightful period — endeared existence; and will enable me, if called to do so, to meet death with calmness and fortitude, knowing I leave you sustained by a powerful arm, and firmly relying on the never-failing supports of true religion. But we are right in asking and expecting

to be spared in the day of battle. The soldier's motto, that

Every bullet has its billet,

is a very good one, inspiring hope and resignation at the same time."

Mrs. Delville wept and smiled, hoped and feared, but finally determined to remain behind. Isabel, with sisterly kindness, offered a home and parent's attention to the little Delvilles; "you know," said she, "I propose no more than I will cheerfully perform; send them and their nurses to me, and they shall want neither parent nor friend in your absence; where I am unequal, my dear Escott, who is all-sufficient, will assist in the sweet task of judicious instruction."

Mrs. Delville felt the liberality and kindness of this sincere friendship; but much as she longed to share her husband's fatigues, could not accept it; young as her children were, they were daily and carefully instructed in their religious

duties. To give them early and strong impressions of religion, was the endeavour of both parents: to correct their first faults, guide the first dawn of opening reason, and bend the pliant twig to the ways of wisdom, was Mrs. Delville's constant care, from principles of the purest love and duty. Isabel laughed at her "puny efforts," as she called them, to ruin nature's freedom; talked largely and learnedly on leaving nature to do her own work; on reason pointing out and correcting her own errors; on expanding the young mind by liberality of thought and sentiment; and above all, keeping it untainted by prejudice. But Mrs. Delville was not to be talked out of her duties; nor would she, when put to the test, allow inclination to overcome conscience. She committed her loved husband to the care of the God of battles; and as with her infants she received his parting blessing and fond embrace, smiled through her fast flowing tears, in

the blissful hope that he would be restored in safety to objects whose lives were bound up in his; and then sought, by active employ, to chase the benumbing chilness of fears that would occasionally shake her confidence, and impart a languor to the discharge of her duties.

“ I fear, my dear Eliza,” said Isabel, some time after the regiment was gone, “ you will injure your own health, and destroy your spirits, in this strict attendance on your infant boy; you should preserve all your health and beauty for your brave soldier: let not his greeting be pale looks and languid eyes, I beseech you.”

“ Alas ! Isabel, it will probably be long ere this greeting shall take place; in the mean time, my little Herbert occupies my attention, and calls it off from wearying doubts and painful apprehensions, which, *malgré* all my efforts, will sometimes oppress spirits not naturally strong.”

“ I begin to suspect, dear Eliza, that you are as determined a worshipper of idols as your neighbours, only not quite so candid in your idolatry ; so it generally happens : though people profess the most opposite sentiments, examine well the motives of their conduct, more particularly in matters that immediately concern self, you will find they are in fact the self-same, though differently clothed and christened : call it what you will, still, stript of its attire, the naked principle of thought and action is in all the same.”

“ There is too much truth in your observation, my dear Isabel : I feel constantly the danger of making my husband and children the very first objects of my care and consideration ; yet, knowing this to be wrong, I struggle against it with some degree of success : you must allow me a little credit for the patience with which I have supported the last

agitating month, so replete with trials, from those constant little skirmishes."

"Give you credit for patience, Eliza! why you are a modern Griselda! But nobody ever yet proved to me that patience was a praiseworthy attribute; it is one of those stupid, tame, uncharacter-like virtues, that people enjoy in common with the sheep, the ass, and the mule: a case in point, do pray admire the *patience* of that long-eared animal nibbling off the buds of promise at your garden door, while the urchin behind him continues to load his sides with blows."

"I have very often done so, my dear; they are creatures for whom I feel almost respect."

"Silence, silence," interrupted Isabel; "we shall have you on the old monkish fable of the Ass and the Cross, presently. You have been lecturing me, Eliza, for ages, and fancying yourself wonderously superior, simply because

you were unacquainted with your own heart, and make your religion a bugbear. Now be advised by me ; throw off this ignominious bondage ; dare to own your feelings ; and instead of fearing, you shall make your husband and children your first care ; glory in their being so ; acknowledge boldly the truth that you adore them, and live but in them. What in the name of common sense should a wife and mother make her idols, but her family ; and why should she blush to own the most noble virtuous feelings of her soul, and meanly cling to such poor, paltry, would-be virtues as patience and humility, to obtain that approbation, which is the very aliment her heart needs to feed on, and which would be willingly ceded to superior abilities, such as you really possess, were they not clouded by early prejudices, which tenaciously cling to you."

" From those early prejudices I draw my chief support under every affliction ;

and from the same source arises my feelings of gratitude and happiness; deprived of them, I should be poor indeed, without hope for my husband's preservation, my children's welfare, or my own continuance in the path of duty: seek not, Isabel, to rob me of my chiefest good, or lower in my estimation that Power, whom alone I may adore without sin."

"Do you consider the work the missionaries are engaged in, in this country, a good work, Eliza?"

"Undoubtedly so."

"On what arguments do you rest their utility?"

"On the advantages, spiritual and temporal, that a Christian enjoys over a Pagan, Hindoo, or Mahometan."

"What are those advantages, dear Mrs. Delville?"

"They are far more numerous than I can now attempt to enter into a description of; but emancipation from the dread-

ful state of ignorance that demands the horrid rites continually paid to their huge god, the sacrifices daily required, and the self-immolation we so often witness, as well as the good ground of hope given them of future happiness, are arguments fully sufficient to make every Christian rejoice to meet missionaries here; though I, with many others, could wish they were of the Protestant faith."

"To all those fancied advantages, Eliza, they might plausibly offer the objections you have just done to my more enlightened proposals. From the worship of yon advancing idol, that immense multitude draw their sources of hope, happiness, and support; and the wretch whose bones shall crush under its ponderous wheels, will die exulting in as full certainty of a glorious reward, as any of the fathers of the Roman, or martyrs of the Protestant Church. Depend on it, Eliza, the same principle actuates all, the monk Augustin, Peter the Hermit, Martin

Luther, his famous aid-de-camps, the Taylor and Baker of baptismal memory ; your famous Henry, his daughter Mary, her active friend Jeffries, and all the many bishops, laymen, doctors, &c. that fell a sacrifice to his fury, and yon riotous disgusting crew. What but the same species of madness, the same infatuation, actuated all, and reigns here now ; and the same thing brings these austere poor souls belted across the vast Pacific, content, if by unheard-of labour, they turn the current of prejudice their own way, and fold the bandage of blindness the other side outwards. Oh, my dear friend, shake off all this subjugation, and dare to be the thing you were formed to be, a reasonable, rational thinking being : standing firmly on your own feet, rejecting all mystic or exterior aid, aspire at being truly a little lower than the angels, by your own innate strength."

" Which innate strength, my dear deluded Isabel, is perfect weakness, as many

of your admired writers have already experienced : Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, and Diderot, have already left their testimonies of a fatal error behind them in different ways. Until I see a disciple of your system equal that of the self-denying humble Christian, by the unerring rules of a life of painful vicissitude sustained cheerfully, and a death full of hope in a blissful immortality, I must decidedly give the preference to the last : and to the hacknied query, "*Who shall force an unwelcome guest to sit out half his time, or blame him if he goes?*" or "*Death's thousand doors stand open wide, by hemp, by poison, and by steel,*" I reply simply, "*Thou shalt do no murder.*"

CHAP. VIII.

WHEN Horace Fitzallen quitted the house of Mr. Penn, in search of another habitation, his first thoughts turned towards Macdonald, of whom he had lately seen but little. But Macdonald was nowhere to be found ; and he was slowly pacing the streets in uncertain thought, when at the door of a large handsome-looking house he saw standing an old college acquaintance. As soon as the first recognising shouts of salutation were past, Sir Clement Leslie invited his friend Horace to dinner, adding, “ I lodge and board here ; they are very superior sort of people, and have accommodations for one more. If you know any fine fellow that one could make a sort of companion of, do pray send him along.”

“Faith,” replied Fitzallen, “it is the thing I am in search of myself; so if you can recommend the accommodations, why the matter is settled.”

Sir Clement protested he was delighted beyond measure, at the prospect of securing Horace to the house.

“You will,” said he, “become one of us; we are five in number, true bloods, lads of spirit, up to every thing: we have, too, a club of free spirits; you must belong to the club, Horace. How long have you been in Philadelphia?”

“A twelvemonth, nearly.”

“A year! why where the devil have you hid yourself? and now looking so grave and serious — not become a saint, I hope, my fine fellow?”

“Not I, faith, never farther from it. No, no, free-thinking and free acting for me.”

In a short time every preliminary was settled, and Horace found himself in the centre of all that was gay and brilliant,

dissipated and dashing: his mornings were for some time given to the counting-house of Penn and Co.; but late hours, irregular habits, and free drinking, made his visits there later and shorter daily.

His intercourse with Robert Penn was very slight, and of Esther he never heard any thing, and soon began to forget he had ever known her, when his recollection was awakened at a ball, by overhearing his own name repeated in different accents of surprise and indignation among a group of belles. "I assure you," said one, "it is the same; there are not two of the name in Philadelphia; and mamma knows Mrs. Elton, Mr. Penn's married daughter, extremely well, and heard a great deal of it from her."

"Oh," added another, "if what you say be true, I shall defend him no more, though he is so very handsome, and dances so well; not that I blame him for thinking as he chooses on those points that people dispute so much about, but

he was undoubtedly wrong in seducing that silly, pretty quaker from her love of the Bible and plain bonnets. He should have left the little simpleton her virtue and simplicity, seeing she had nothing else to recommend her."

"You forget," rejoined the first speaker, "her large fortune : Mr. Penn is supposed to be the richest man in the city. Mr. Fitzallen would have married her, he even went on his knees to her parents, and offered to marry her without a shilling ; but they refused him, and turned him out of the house."

"More fools they," said a goodnatured-looking girl, who just now joined the group, and whom Horace recognised as the sister of his flighty acquaintance, Edward Acton : "more fools they ; what can they expect for her now among the puritans ; and in the world she is not known. The young man, I believe, is worthless enough, but so are all the men of the present day ; their heads turned —

their hearts forgotten in their composition — some stark mad about one set of opinions, and some about another, all disgusting and annoying.”

“ May I intreat to know what set of poor beings have fallen thus heavily under Miss Acton’s displeasure,” said Horace, advancing from the window that had screened him into the midst of the female party.

“ Without intreaty,” replied she, “ a bare request will be sufficient. I was just taking the liberty of abusing young men *en masse*. I have heard my mother, and ladies of her standing, say they were once polite, attentive, and obliging, ready to sacrifice their own wishes or desires to those who were about them, particularly to ladies. I am sure I wish I had been born in those days, merely to have seen the difference ; for they are all now self-willed violent politicians, philosophers, and I know not what ; but any thing rather than pleasant.”

“Had you said just half this, my dear Miss Acton, I might have made myself unhappy by thinking you meant it; but so much proves you are only amusing yourself at the expense of my poor fraternity.”

“Not a bit of it, Mr. Fitzallen, I believe it all, and you know I do, but you still retain a little European civility, which our rough countrymen will soon rub off, so do not plume yourself on it.”

“My highest boast would be, not to be distinguished from a native American, the country that above all others I esteem and venerate, and for which I have left home, friends, country, relations, and rank. But what does Miss St. Aubin say,” continued he, turning to a tall elegant girl, who had not yet spoken, “does she also give a vote against young men?”

“I know too little of them to venture an opinion,” returned she, modestly; “it were hard indeed if faults enough

were discoverable in a ball-room to give a bad impression, and I have not seen a great deal of the sex out of it."

"But you have seen enough, Matilda, to convince you of their violence; the uproar you were witness to at my father's the other day, between my brother, Sir Clement Leslie, and some others, was sufficient for this," said Miss Acton.

"Do you know Sir Clement?" demanded Horace, in surprise.

"In common with *tout le monde*," replied Matilda, with a blushing smile. "He is so completely *un homme du monde*, that it is not possible to visit and not know Sir Clement."

Dancing now commenced, and Horace led the fair Matilda to join the gay throng; they had reached the bottom of an English country dance, and were cheerfully conversing, when the words, "Another Esther Penn!—if she had been my sister I'd have blown his brains out," reached his ear; and before he

could discover the speaker, the laughing, "Oh, egad, all the girls of the present day are fair game," announced the arrival of Macdonald.

Horace turned a fierce look on the first speaker, then shaking hands with Macdonald, enquired where he had been so long.

"Where, why egad near to Davy's locker:—returning from the Summer Islands, I got wrecked and played the deuce with, little expecting ever again to touch *terra firma*; but since by good luck I have, here for the future I mean to stay, and let the pelf-lovers go seek it on the ocean."

"You may say so, Macdonald, now you have got in your harvest," replied a little mean-looking man, in vulgar provincial English, "but Mr. Fitzallen and I must be content to fish on land or sea for pelf, eh, Mr. Fitzallen."

Horace looked down with ineffable scorn on the little man, pronounced an

emphatic "Sir," and turning on his heel, apologised to Matilda for his inattention.

"Sir!" repeated the little man, "what does he mean? No great gentlemen here, no esquires and beggars, — all the same, all equal here. 'Sir!' did he mean to frighten me? I shall meet him often, and let him know 'Jack's as good as his master,' in a free country."

Horace quitted the ball-room at a late hour, disposed to think the world in arms against him, and sincerely wishing all the family of Penns at the antipodes. Such a bluster about a foolish little affair he never before heard;—why, in Ireland such things happened every day, and no one ever thought of it."

"The fault is your own," replied Edward Acton. "What but the most thoughtless stupidity could induce you to bury yourself in the family circle of the richest, most respected, and most rigid quaker in the city; — and then go fooling with the girls: upon my life,

'twas a confoundedly ill-planned thing altogether ;—why the merest green-horn in America would have acted wiser. Among us the thing goes for nothing,—but among the broad-brims you are done for ever.”

“ So let it be,” replied Horace, haughtily ; “ I am master of my own actions, and will not endure the strictures of any man living, tamely.”

“ *Comme vous voulez* ; tamely or roughly, young man, this is a land of liberty ; but if you abuse these liberties, you must take the consequences. Every one will resent their own injuries ; and I tell you plainly, had it been my sister, I would have pulled your nose through the city, and then have kicked you into the river.”

Horace could ill brook this freedom of language from an inferior, as he considered Acton. His fierce and haughty reply produced another from the transatlantic champion, and a violent quarrel

was only prevented by the timely interference of Sir Clement Leslie, who was but slightly acquainted with Acton, but considered him as a rash hot-headed democratic youth, with whom intimacy or a quarrel was equally to be avoided.

“ I will tell you what it is, Horace,” said Sir Clement, the next day ; “ you must gently withdraw yourself from Acton and his set, they are not respectable ; and let these Yankees talk how they will, all men are not alike, nor can a British gentleman associate with them, or the hordes of colonizing adventurers that jostle one at every turn, without feeling constantly inclined to knock the rascals down : — but here are enough, Horace, of our own sort for intimates. And in public, why, if you dance with a cobbler’s daughter, or hand the wife of a hunted demagogue into her sledge, shrug your shoulders, and think, I am not at home ; we do not do this at St. James’s or the Lord Lieutenant’s. But for decency’s

sake, do not quarrel with the democrats, nor seduce the little Quakers any more. Notoriety may be desirable, — but let it be for wit, for abilities, for spirit, and good sense ; all of which you eminently possess, if you know how to use them.”

“ Faith, Clement, I believe you are right,” replied Horace ; “ I have been deucedly situated since I came here ; but, however, it is past now, and the future shall be more rationally employed.”

Sir Clement Leslie, like Horace, was become a resident in Philadelphia, with the hope of improving his fortune. His uncle, a man of considerable wealth, had adopted him, on the condition he continued to deserve his favour ; and Clement, who, though wild, dissipated, and extravagant, always kept his uncle’s fortune and his mother’s jointure house in view, with the warm desire of enjoying both in England, sought by attention, and an appearance of compliance to the bachelor whims of Mr. Leslie, to retain

the good opinion now entertained of him. The old gentleman was not very strict over his nephew in general. Religion he treated as a foolish fable, and aristocracy as madness : yet any flagrant breach of morality, and connection with men of low birth and education, would have been crimes of the most unpardonable nature. In the latter, Clement was not likely to offend ; though lax in principle and politics, the dignity of his birth, and unsullied purity of his family name, were his proudest boasts, and by him considered as the highest honours a young man can inherit.

The circle into which Horace was now introduced, differed widely as possible from the connections he had formed on first coming, or from the quiet useful sphere of Robert Penn's family. It was composed of wit, genius, and ability : to shine in company, excel among themselves, and argue ably on political, metaphysical, and philosophical subjects, was the end and aim of their pursuits. Their

club was a sort of debating society, from whence was excluded all adventurers, demagogues, and even *parvenu's*. Professedly, it was composed of choice spirits, *bien nées*, and some few among the *parvenu's*, whose great talents entitled them to a superior place in society. Into this select club Horace was admitted a member; and it may naturally be concluded, would, in his unsettled state, derive rather good than harm from the society of men, who, while they openly denied the very existence of religion, did not patronise vice; and who, while denying the agency of a superintending Providence, held morality of conduct essential to happiness or respectability. But unfortunately Horace had not stability, and was the partisan of Macdonald and his noisy companions, or the adherent of Sir Clement's more refined club, alternately, without gaining the esteem or confidence of either. His fine person, and easy,

graceful manners, soon gained him the *entrée* of every gentleman's house in the city, or its neighbourhood. At dinners, suppers, balls, parties of every kind, Horace found himself an invited and desired guest: he would have found it difficult to point out a friend, but in acquaintance none was richer; and Horace contended that no such thing as true friendship was to be found out of print. At public places, and at the houses of many people of fashion, Horace met Matilda St. Aubin. Her frank, yet modest behaviour, the cheerfulness of her disposition, and the beauty of her person, rendered Matilda a general favourite. With Horace she was always pleasant, yet appeared less at ease than with almost any one else, a circumstance he was at no loss to account readily for, and which, spite of his leveling antichristian principles, he could not help respecting her the more on account of. He had been dancing with her an en-

tire evening ; the fourth he had devoted exclusively to her, and bid *bon soir* with an air of tenderness that his late conduct rendered suspicious ; when Sir Clement, taking him by the arm, said, with a serious voice, “ Horace, I will not attempt to apologise for the apparent rudeness of my present interference, or the interest I take in whatever concerns Matilda St. Aubin. You know, I believe, that she is some family connection of mine, but that would not influence me, did I not think her a really innocent, modest girl : your attentions are become too marked to escape observation ; if your intentions are honourable, good luck attend you ; but if contrarywise, remember, though she has no brother, and but a quiet, sickly father, she has a cousin who will defend her cause.”

“ Upon my soul, sir,” replied Horace, “ you have taken a mighty high tone in this affair. Pray how long have you been such a saint, as to entitle you to

the self-dubbed honour of a chivalrous knight. Depend on it, the damsel in question needs not your prowess to defend her from the enchanter Fitzallen."

"Nay, nay, Fitzallen, do not be offended, nor suppose I mean to affect the saint, nothing like it; but you are aware, that to the utmost verge of latitudinism, you have stretched your gallantries in this country; go on and welcome, but leave respectable families out of the question. I know, by your friend Macdonald, and his party, this would be ridiculed as cowardly and narrow. They set no bounds to their vices or irregularities; but I would advise you, as I did once before, to steer clear of such companions and principles."

"Faith, Clement, you are in a confounded advising humour to-night; what the deuce, are you going to turn Methodist Missionary, or what has taken you?"

"Nothing in the world but a wish to

prevent you running another foolish race with a girl, that a twelvemonth ago, I fancied myself half in love with ; but my good uncle said it would not do, and Matilda looked grave ; so the flame, for want of fuel, died a natural death. I like liberality and free sentiment as well any man living ; but hang it, Horace, you are sometimes too bad."

" I don't know, Clement, were the pill well gilded, but what Matilda would make Benedict of me ; I never saw a girl I thought it would be so pleasant to swallow it for."

" O, if that's your mark, I have done ; St. Aubin, I fancy, does not abound in *les biens*, but Matilda is his only child ; the thing may do very well, perhaps."

From this time Horace became the constant attendant of Matilda ; — in her walks, he was her companion, in the dance, her constant partner ; — at parties, at the theatre, or in excursions, her attentive, ever ready esquire ; — at her father's

house he read with her, accompanied her with his flute as she played ; copied English music for her, and improved her execution, and altogether played the amiable with such success, that poor Matilda found all her resolutions of doubting his professions, mistrusting his intentions, and holding him at a distance, gradually fade away.

“ I do not think,” said she to her friend Harriet Acton, “ that I love him, or absolutely esteem him ; but there is a fascination about him, a manner in his attentions, quite unlike any other I have ever seen. My father says it is natural to Europeans, particularly to Irishmen, but I have never witnessed it but in Fitzallen.”

“ Not in Sir Clement Leslie, Matilda ? surely he is every whit as pleasant, and has better morals by far.”

“ So I am told ; but Sir Clement does not meet my ideas of a desirable companion ; and as to morals, I believe

those of Fitzallen as good as any young man; I am certain he possesses a good heart."

"A good heart, indeed! he proved that by his conduct to Esther Penn. I am credibly informed, that from the time he left their house, until now, he has never once enquired for her."

"Indeed, Harriet," interrupted Matilda, eagerly, "he cannot be blamed for that; the girl was a weak, silly, forward chit, as much to blame as himself; yet he offered every recompense in his power, would have married her instantly, and hushed the matter up; but the Penns spurned his alliance, treated him contemptuously, and turned him out of doors, forbidding him ever to see her again; and the old man does not speak to him once a month. I wonder, after such treatment, who would enquire for her; not any gentleman or man of spirit."

“ Did he tell you all this pretty story himself, Matilda ? ”

“ Why, *yes* ; but I have heard it from many others ; and after all, it was but a young man’s fault. I wonder so much has been said about it ; very ridiculous.”

“ As to that, Matilda, there is no vice but what is a young man’s fault of the present day. What they will bring matters to, I am at a loss to know ; virtue is no longer virtue, nor vice no longer hideous ; both are new named, and the nomenclature requires study and perseverance to read and understand ; and even then, some heads like mine are so incorrigibly dull and stupid, that after all, they are not convinced, that for ‘ seduction,’ read ‘ innocent amusement,’ — ‘ blowing a man’s brains out,’ ‘ honour,’ — ‘ abuse of all laws,’ ‘ spirit,’ — and ‘ contempt of religion and morality,’ ‘ reason,’ is not altogether deceit and falsehood. What think you of these things ? ”

“ I think nothing at all about them ;

politics, philosophy, and religion, are equally out of my sphere; papa never troubles his head about religion, and of course I do not; we do no harm, but strive to live happily, and enjoy ourselves, doing what good we can for the poor and thinking well of every one. But here is my cousin Agnes coming across the square; she has religion enough for all her family, and some to spare, and will explain the nomenclature to you, if you wish it."

At this instant Miss Courtland was announced, and a sensible looking young woman, whose deeply fringed dark blue eyes, and pale, pensive countenance, spoke a close acquaintance with affliction, entered the room. The common sentences of meeting and introductions passed, "It is rather singular," said Miss Courtland, "that the last two gentlemen I saw, were Mr. Acton and Mr. Fitzallen; the latter, if report says true, Matilda, even dearer than a brother to you."

“ But that report seldom says true, is, you know, so well allowed, as to have even become a proverb,” replied Matilda.

“ I confess, in the present case,” rejoined Miss Courtland, “ that I am particularly desirous report should be found the liar she is stated to be.”

“ May I,” said Harriet Acton, “ ask why? You may venture to say any thing that concerns Matilda before me, without scruple. This subject has been our theme for the last hour, and I long to hear your objections stated.”

“ I suspect, Miss Acton, they will not be gratifying to you, and perhaps not perfectly intelligible. But you will recollect, my life, until very lately, has been spent in a Christian country, in the most favoured spot on the civilised or known globe, in dear England, where, while I drained the cup of affliction to the very dregs with one hand, I was taught with the other to seize firm hold on immortal truths ; to place my foot firmly

on the rock which nothing shall shake ; and through the wreck of contending nations, look calmly forward to the reward that awaiteth the just. After this preface, you will not be surprised to hear that my objections to this connection arise from the total want of religion in both parties ; particularly on that side which, in almost every instance, preponderates—I mean the husband's. It is a fearful and forbidden thing for a *religious* woman to connect herself with an unbeliever ; but such things have done well in a very few instances, where both parties possessed affection and good sense ; but a woman connecting herself by marriage with a religious man, is almost sure to become an excellent Christian ; the preponderating weight is then in the right scale ; and it is natural to the female mind to imitate those she loves : but for two to meet, to whom the word of inspiration is a sealed book, what is to be expected but that both shall come to destruction, and,

worse than all, shall give existence to a helpless race, to whom they are utterly unqualified to act as parents or instructors; thus active duties neglected, will but sink them lower in the pit of misery, and their children grow up bramble-bushes instead of olive-branches around their table, and the father's promise be converted into a curse."

"But, my dear Miss Courtland," said Harriet, "suppose two young people, both moral good characters, against whom no evil can be alleged, would you not then rationally expect to see them happy, and diligently fulfilling their duties, though not bible-reading professing Christians?"

"Indeed I should not; on the contrary, I should look with pity on them, to see so fair a structure built on a sandy foundation. Life is full of vicissitudes, and the diligent fulfilment of a wife and parent's duties, require constant and effectual assistance from a

Divine power: the waves of affliction, and the floods of varied woe, in beating against the character you intended to describe, shall wash it down, because not founded on the rock of Divine truth, but on the sandy foundation of self-sufficiency. In this I have answered rather your meaning than your words. A moral *good* character, against whom *no evil* can be alleged, would be a superior Christian — you say, if they were not bible-reading; this of itself I allege to be a fault of deepest dye, the rejecting offered mercy, and neglecting the command, ‘Search the Scriptures,’ living without God in the world: thus you see, I prove there is much evil in *your* moral good character.”

“All this may be very fine,” said Matilda, “in England, but our ideas are widely different; and I must think, if people continue in the way they have been brought up, they cannot go very wrong. It is the fashion, I know, to be

wiser than our parents, but a fashion and wisdom I have no ambition to emulate; every one must answer for their own conduct in the best way they can. I do not know that I shall ever marry Fitzallen, but he is as good as young men in general, and it is not very modest or prudent for young ladies to be enquiring too closely into the follies of a handsome, fashionable young man; they are wild oats that must be sowed, but marriage generally corrects them: at all events, I am quite content to follow the steps of my mother, who never, that I know of, heard the name of the sort of religion you have been describing, but she did her duty; and though she died when I was not more than four years of age, papa laments her now; and I really think it would be very presuming in me to raise such unheard-of objections."

"I could wish your humility had a better source, my dear Matilda; but suppose your father a man of acknowledged

bad habits, would you then think it your duty to follow his example? you will reply, no, certainly : neither is it your duty to continue with your mental eyes bandaged, because your father tied the bandage on to make you like himself, whom the goddess folly had long ago blinded. Another thing, rest assured truth is the same in every country, clime, and hemisphere ; therefore, if any thing I have said be true for me in England, it is true for you in Philadelphia.” Further remark was prevented by the entrance of the object in question.

Horace came in with the air of a person perfectly at home, and secure of a welcome reception. Neither choosing to countenance what she thought wrong, nor offend by useless remark, Agnes Courtland rose to depart : Harriet Acton, seizing her hand, begged to be considered a friend ; “ I am,” said she, “ a rude original,—perhaps if you knew me better, you might be more inclined to

respect me. I have been strongly interested by you this morning ; — will you favour me with a continuation of the subject at some future opportunity ?”

“ Willingly,” returned Agnes ; “ if you will come to me to-morrow evening, my time and abilities shall be at your service ; perhaps you have some gay engagement, — but my mornings are fully employed, I must therefore see you of an evening, or not at all.”

“ I have no engagement, dear Miss Courtland, that I have not vainly tried the effect of ere this, and will not gladly resign to come to you ; so expect me at the time appointed.”

CHAP. IX.

AGNES COURTLAND was the daughter of an English gentleman of high family, birth and connections, but small wealth, beside that of unsullied rectitude, unbounded charity in its fullest sense, a disposition, in which all the evil passions were laid by the powerful influences of religion, and a firm belief in the Christian faith : he had barely sufficient to support his family, which consisted of his wife, one son, and a daughter, for whose provision he was taught to reckon on the family estate. Its possessor, his cousin, being now advanced in years, and never having been married, he and his son were heirs apparent.

Early in life the Honourable John Courtland married a beautiful American, then on a visit with some friends in Jamaica. She was portionless; and his father, Lord John, mortally offended, sold his paternal estate, that he might alienate it from this only son, and died soon after, leaving his property to two daughters and an empty title to his son.

For many years Lord John was the happiest of mankind: with the assistance of his lovely wife he educated his children in the bosom of retirement and domestic tranquillity, beyond which they neither knew nor felt a wish. At seventeen Alfred was sent to college, and Agnes, then just twelve, became their only care.

Two years after, an old friend of Lady Courtland's spent some of the summer months at their cottage; he was a widower of at least forty years of age; but by one of those cruel infatuations which have so frequently disgraced this favoured

isle, and brought misery into many a family, Lady Courtland for him forgot or broke every tie of duty, affection, or gratitude to her husband, her children, and her God. The culprits quitted the cottage, leaving to the broken-hearted father and daughter such full proofs of guilt, that needed but the formality of a trial to obtain a divorce with heavy damages. But on this, Lord John and his children were of one opinion, the price of adultery might bring with it a curse, but could not diminish their griefs nor prosper in their hands : when, therefore, the law expenses were paid from it, the remainder was placed in the British funds for the wretched woman's sole use and benefit.

To the Courtlands this stroke was but the beginning of misfortune. The only one of Lord John's two sisters, with whom any intercourse had been maintained, came to them soon after ; on her journey she caught cold, and after three

months extreme suffering, died, unnoticed and unlamented by her cold, fashionable husband and children; between whom and Lord John, a few polite letters, with thanks for attentions, sorrow for not being able just now to leave town, (the birth-day being so near,) and regret that her mother's *faux pas* prevented them from inviting Agnes that spring, closed all accounts and all acquaintance.

Lord John lost his spirits and his strength. Alfred withdrew his name from the college books, and prevailed on his father to try change of air and scene; but the blow was too surely given, and though he lingered three years, giving to his affectionate children every variation of hope and fear, and all the advice and support that religion could afford, he constantly felt the gnawing tooth of increasing disease, and at last ceased to breathe in that loved cot-

tage which had witnessed his greatest griefs and purest joys.

Immediately after the death of Lord John, his cousin announced that he had privately married his housekeeper some years since, and had already three heirs to the estate ; — thus fell poor Alfred's hope of an earldom and large property : but still they had the cottage and some little income, and were determined to be happy.

Agnes was, by her father's full consent, engaged to a young collegian, a friend of her brother's, to whom she had given her whole heart, and with whom she looked forward to many happy years.

But even this very moderate share of wealth did not long continue ; the large adjoining property, of which the cottage had once formed part, fell into the hands of a vulgar, covetous lawyer, from whose rude addresses and fulsome declarations of love, poor Agnes suffered much dis-

gusting persecution. Finding he made no progress in her good graces, from entreaties he came to threats; hinting that her brother's title to the estate was not worth sixpence, — hints which, at the time, Agnes disregarded, or treated with contempt, and that a more powerful interest soon drove from her recollection.

In a state of the most wretched misery and despair, half-naked and half-starving, Lord Alfred Courtland encountered his abused and deserted mother. Forgetting her faults, and remembering only that she was once his fond parent, Alfred received her, kindly entreated her, and again returned her to that home from whence her flight had shortened his loved father's days, and clouded her children with sorrow.

She had been there some months, fretful, repining, and thankless; embittering every hour with cruel discontent and reproaches, and often driving her

children from her to pour out their tears and prayers in secret before Him, who alone could give them strength equal to their day, or give them that wisdom necessary to regulate their conduct, — when Alfred was served with a formal notice to quit the cottage. This brought on a tedious and rather expensive lawsuit, which, added to her other griefs, Agnes thought would be insupportable, were it not for the sustaining affection of her lover, who daily became dearer to her, and more necessary to her happiness.

Another year rolled round, every day taking somewhat from their little fortune, and adding somewhat to their burden of affliction and perplexities.

Lady Courtland, wearied with the retirement of her daughter's life, now that she had regained some degree of health, and impatient at the neglect shown her by a populous neighbourhood, had again sa-

crificed every thing due to herself and her exemplary daughter, by accepting the *protection* of their rich neighbour, her son's persecutor. — This was the heaviest blow Agnes had ever been called on to sustain : nothing but the arm of Omnipotence could have upheld her under it ; and immediately after, the cause was decided, by which their no longer favourite but almost sole property, was lost to them, by some defect in the title.

From the wreck of their fortune, Alfred could just purchase a cornetcy of dragoons, and Agnes had still one anchor of earthly hope in the prospect of a speedy union with her lover, who was just presented with a valuable living. — But this last fond hope Agnes was soon doomed to resign : her lover had never been ordained, and his patron now positively refused to give him the living, or permit any clergyman to give him a title for ordination, unless he resigned all thoughts

of a connection with the daughter of a woman so depraved as Lady Courtland. — This in a letter to Agnes he stated ; adding, that all his relations were strenuous with him to break an engagement so disgraceful ; that he himself had many doubts and fears of its propriety and issue, but acknowledged his promises as sacred, and threw himself on her mercy for support and happiness.

Agnes read this final overthrow of all her youthful dreams of bliss with streaming eyes and an aching heart. It required not a moment's deliberation what course to pursue ; her reply was short and decisive ; she did not trust herself with one unnecessary sentence of regret or good wishes, — the path of duty lay before her, and its thorny intricacies were not unknown to Agnes.

Alfred wept over his loved sister's fate, while his heart whispered him that the daughter of such a mother might rob him of peace, but could never become

his wife : as if by tacit consent, the subject was no more named by either brother or sister, and six months rolled round in resigned submission and active industry, when, late on a stormy night, the wretched Lady Courtland again presented herself, faint, sick, weary, and in poverty, at the door of her unfortunate children.

Agnes pleaded for her with the indignant Alfred — she was a female and their mother, thus entitled to their care and attention. Alfred at last rather yielded than consented to her remaining with them ; but it was soon evident that her days were drawing to a close. The brutal conduct of her late paramour, and the corroding truth of self-condemnation, had broken a constitution, not originally strong, beyond the power of medicine to repair. For nine sad months Agnes endured all that mortal can suffer, from cruel ingratitude and the taunts of a depraved heart, a weak head, and temper soured

by constant pain, without one particle of religion or future hope. Agnes prayed, wept, and laboured to awaken some concern for eternity in her evidently dying parent, but to no effect: the good seed appeared never to have been sown, and the soil now incapable of receiving it. She clung to her early imbibed ideas of annihilation with dreadful tenacity, and after suffering in body and mind almost incredible torments, ended a life, whose latter years had been the death of her husband and the ruin of her children, without leaving them even a faint hope of her future happiness as a legacy. With all the economy poor Agnes could possibly exert, and all the privations she could endure, this long sickness and subsequent funeral obliged her to contract some debts, the payment of which appeared almost impossible.

Alfred cheered her with hope and kindness; but her wan cheek, subdued, uncomplaining aspect, and frequent tears,

pierced his affectionate heart with a thousand throes. Agnes every day declared herself better, and devised many plans for increasing their scanty income; but nothing met with Alfred's approbation, and her spirits were now too much broken to make great exertions. She thought her span of life nearly exhausted, and looked forward with certain hope that with life her sorrows would end, and leave her dear Alfred at liberty to improve his cloudy prospects.

It was after a day of severe trial, rendered particularly so by the cutting and sarcastic observations of an officer's wife, to whom she had formerly been introduced as a woman of great good sense and unimpeachable character, while she sat seeking consolation from the book of inspiration, with dim eyes and a heavy heart, that Alfred entered the room with a light step and cheerful aspect. After many tender enquiries and endeavours to cheer the drooping

Agnes, he produced a letter, that day received from his maternal uncle in Philadelphia: it was written with much feeling, and stated that his grandfather, Hugh St. Aubin, had lately died, leaving him, jointly with his sister, the half of his property. St. Aubin, the uncle, said it was not large, but sufficient, if resided on and well managed, to provide handsomely for a family.

“ Now, my darling sister,” continued Alfred, “ can you consent to quit your native country, and, with a brother, who lives but for you, cross the broad Atlantic in search of health and competence? This country has been the theatre of many heart-rending scenes to you — a change of air and society will, I flatter myself, prove in every way serviceable to my beloved sister.”

Agnes, with a deep sigh, thought they had little reason to expect much from American society or morals; but professed herself ready cheerfully to accom-

pany Alfred to any part of the habitable globe, adding, " Should I be spared, and my health improve, a blessing I can scarcely expect, and perhaps ought not to wish, it will be my earnest endeavour to become useful to society in some way or other, and perhaps Philadelphia may offer a fairer field for this exertion than my own favoured and still dearly loved country. At all events it becomes a duty in both to go, and I have sufficient confidence in your religious principles, my dear Alfred, to believe even American atheism cannot shake them. Schooled in the stern school of deep affliction, you have, I trust, been savingly taught to distinguish between truth and falsehood, light and darkness. Give me then what directions are necessary, and consider me your grateful and pleased companion ; for

Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barb'rous climes,
Rivers unknown to song ; where first the sun

Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles, 'tis nought to me,
Since God is ever present — ever felt,
In the void waste, as in the city full;
And where *He* vital breathes, there *must be joy*.

Alfred found no difficulty in disposing of his commission, and, with the money arising from it, paid all demands that could be made upon him; purchased necessaries for their voyage, and such comforts as long distress had taught them to do without; paid their passage, and quitted Europe, rich in the possession of an approving conscience, and an almost unequalled friend and sister.

Agnes watched with aching eyes the receding white cliffs of her native country. She thought of her blighted prospects — her deserted affections — her father, mother, and once happy home — of all that home had promised — and the disappointment and trials that had been her lot.

In the midst of these reflections she turned her eyes on the countenance of her brother, beaming love and tenderness. The happier prospects now opening to their view arose before her ; pressing Alfred's hand to her trembling heart, she proffered a grateful thanksgiving to Him who had hitherto sustained her steps, and not another sigh was sent towards England.

The American property did not disappoint the sanguine Alfred. Industry lent her willing contribution to its increase — the blessing of Providence crowned his efforts — and cheerful content rendered the little mansion an earthly paradise.

Agnes soon recovered her health, and found, in the diligent discharge of active Christian duties, in clothing and instructing the poor, in visiting the sick and afflicted, in administering consolation, or arousing to a sense of danger, that peace of mind which passeth outward show ;

her useful life was a blessing to those around, and the reward of a life spent in her Master's service was a well-founded prospect of eternal bliss. She had sometimes urged her brother to marry, but his smiling assurance that he could nowhere find so sweet a companion as his Agnes, or improve his happiness, which was now complete, silenced the grateful sister, and stimulated her to further exertions.

Such was the new acquaintance Harriet Acton was desirous of improving, and such the cousin Matilda slighted, or considered a little beside herself.

Agnes was quietly seated at her work, and Alfred reading aloud to her, when Miss Acton was announced. The aspect of Miss Courtland's fairy drawing-room was perfectly new to Harriet Acton, and struck on her vision with the effect of enchantment. It was fitted up in the style of an English cottage *ornée*, with windows cut to the floor, and balconies,

over which a variety of aromatic plants were creeping and shedding a soft perfume. The evening was intensely hot, but the little apartment bore a refreshing cool appearance, which, joined to its English *comfort*, Harriet thought (and what she thought she always said) more like what she should fancy heaven, than any thing she had ever seen or pictured before.

“ A Mahometan heaven! Miss Acton, —your friend, your dog, and sherbet! will not that do as well?” said Alfred, who had, since he commenced agriculturist to obtain a livelihood, prudently laid aside the obnoxious title he prided himself on in England.

“ No, indeed, my good sir,” replied the lively Harriet, “ for the dog and sherbet heaven possesses no mind, and dogs will grow tiresome and sherbet sicken; but this ‘mind-illumined’ room could never do either. Nay, don’t laugh at me, nor look incredulous; I have

faults, doubtless, though unacquainted with them — but affectation or falsehood certainly does not rank among them.”

“ Well,” replied Alfred, rising, “ I am sorry it is not now in my power to hear from your own lips an enumeration of your faults and virtues ; but to stay longer would be an absolute fault in me, and going may almost be puffed into a virtue, since it is great self-denial.”

“ Neither commit a fault nor puff a half virtue on my account,” said Harriet, “ for I hope to see you very often ; that, by acquaintance, you may do what I cannot — discover my faults, and with the assistance of your good sister correct them.”

“ A task just suited to the excellence of my sister’s judgment and the piety of her heart ; so adieu *au revoir*.”

“ I think, my dear Miss Courtland,” said Harriet, when Alfred had shut the door, “ I must make an exception in favour of your brother to my general rule,

that all young men are troublesome and disagreeable—violent or sulky: he appears frank, open-hearted, kind and pleasant.”

“ Alfred is all you describe,” returned Miss Courtland, with a smile; “ but I suspect your general rule respects only men much younger than my brother—mere men of the world, who take not God into their ways, but live in the indulgence of every passion.”

At this moment Matilda St. Aubin entered the room.

“ I scarcely know the motive of my visit, dear Agnes,” said Matilda, “ but as Fitzallen is engaged with his club to-night, I thought it might do me no harm to bring my work and hear the conversation between you and Harriet, who, I half fancied yesterday, was smitten with the desire of becoming a saint, as Horace calls you mighty good folks.”

“ I hope it will not, my dear Matilda,” replied Agnes, “ and be careful that you

do not, by neglecting the advice now offered you, lay up a store of future self-condemnation. Twice, in a few words, Mr. Fitzallen was the chief object: recollect, Matilda, he is in every respect a profligate. The miseries and murders of which he is the author in Mr. Penn's family, are but a small part of his enormities."

" Murders! Agnes: you use strong terms."

" No, my dear; none others would be proper. The poor infant fell a sacrifice to its mother's grief and confinement. She is herself daily dying, never probably will again leave her room; and the good, good father, who complains not, weeps not, and says but little, is so evidently heart-struck, that I have no hope he will long survive his darling; but, as dear Mrs. Penn often observes, they will only exchange mortality for immortality a little before her. I should like you, Matilda, to see her, that you may

describe to her betrayer the peace and joy that now fills her heart, and the hatred she feels for the vile doctrines he intoxicated her with; and hear the humble prayers she offers for his and your salvation. You would weep more than you are now doing at sight of the lovely, wasted, dying hands lifted for you; the parched lips, breathing only thanksgiving for so many unmerited favours: or could you witness the resignation of the father, and the firm faith of the mother.”

The tears of Matilda preventing reply, there was for some minutes perfect silence, which was broken by Harriet observing — “that this was an unfortunate affair; the more so, as by some means or other it had become so generally known, and would be among that straight sect always remembered against the family.”

“I am not quite sure of your last observation,” returned Agnes, “but think, should it be the case, it may prove

a blessing, by preventing other young people from drawing on their heads the anger of offended Deity, and the reproach of their fellow mortals."

"There, Miss Courtland," returned Harriet, "is the rock on which even the most rational of you more than moralists split, and by it I think you do infinite mischief; you make your God fierce, angry, and almost implacable, frowning at and forbidding our favourite amusements; abridging us the liberty of pleasing ourselves from day to day. Surely it is the pencil of raving enthusiasm which thus draws a smiling cherub with the features of a dæmon."

"Have you ever read the Old and New Testament, Harriet?" demanded Agnes.

"Yes," returned Harriet, "twice; I read it when very young to my mother and nurse, and again very lately with attention, to try and discover how far my brother and many others are justified

in despising it altogether; and my mother, in considering it as sacred.”

“ Very well ; then I think you there found Christians called to *watchfulness*, as centinels to their post — to *run* for the heavenly *prize*, like racers for the goal — to hardships and war, as *good soldiers* : to which is added exhortations, entreaties, commands to stay every lust, though it be painful as *plucking out a right eye* — declarations that ‘ many shall seek to enter into life and shall not be able ’ — that foolish virgins and slothful servants perish together with greater offenders. Now, perhaps, your smiling cherub will tell you we live in happier days than those in which these writings were penned — that our whole duty may be done without any combat, mortification, vigilance, or labour. But, my dear girl, believe him not ; depend on it, *watchfulness*, prayer, and persevering self-denial, are always necessary to preserve the weak and defend the tempted. Do the plea-

asures of sin allure now with less attraction than in former times? Are our hearts less evil, or do worldly lusts solicit with feebler force than they were wont to do seventeen ages past? Or do the power, subtlety, and malice of wicked angels, long practised in the arts of destruction, require on our parts less resistance or protection? Besides, what ideas must those persons have conceived of Heaven, who suppose it possible for creatures to enter there, who know no more spiritual gratification than the stage or card-table afford; who lead their lives in such ignorance, indolence, and voluptuousness, as some well-regulated states would have punished with heavy penalties? Unless a transformation of soul take place, people of this description are no more capable of an admission into heaven than the profligate, whose conduct makes him a nuisance to all around him, since there is no more meetness for spiritual enjoyment in one than the

other ; and to lead you to hope all this would end well, would be to take part in your evil propensities. Instead then of loving this cruel flattery, my dear Harriet, desire earnestly to hear the whole truth — ‘ whatsoever God hath commanded :’ desire to have the devices of the enemy, the temptations of the world, the corruptions of nature, all set before you without disguise : desire no abatement whatever may be made by those you converse with, in compliance with custom, or in gratification of wrong feelings ; and fear not but the God of justice will prove one of infinite mercy.”

“ This, my dear Miss Courtland,” said Harriet, with tears in her eyes, “ is a very different kind of language to any I have ever yet heard ; my dear mother never could explain her ideas to me : perhaps I was too young to understand her, and since her death, religion, except as a matter of fierce dispute, or biting ridicule, has never fallen in my way. I

am not quite convinced by what you have said, that a good moral character may not be equally useful on earth and secure of heaven, as the self-denying, praying, struggling character you describe. But if you will occasionally lend me your aid, I will again read the Scriptures, and between them and you, may perhaps attain to a knowledge of the truth.”

“ If you read it with an earnest desire after the truth, that is with many supplications to the Divine Teacher, that his word may no longer be to you a sealed book, I will venture to promise my feeble aid, and to predict that your labour will be crowned with success : but bear in mind, that the fiercest opposers of our Lord were well acquainted with the Old Testament, and bore a form of godliness ; yet were they sitting in darkness, and far from the way of peace : they knew neither the meaning of their sacrifices nor the spirit of their own religion :

they were virtuous in their own eyes, trusted in themselves as righteous, and despised others, imagining that they had no need of any better righteousness in the sight of God. Of this character was the apostle Paul before his conversion, verily thinking he ‘*ought* to do many things ‘contrary to the name of Jesus :’ with infinite disdain these *sincere* Pharisees asked the Teacher from heaven, ‘*Are we blind also ?*’ Pursue your enquiry, avoiding the mistakes of the Pharisees, and remembering, unless enlightened from on high, we all are ‘*blind also.*’ ”

Harriet thanked Miss Courtland, and promised to pursue her advice as far as she was capable. “ But,” continued she, “ what you mean by prayer, I positively do not know : I clearly understand it is asking a favour which I feel I need from a person capable of granting it ; but I cannot comprehend how such a doubting, half-believing creature as I know

myself to be, could dare offer the petitions of, perhaps, sin and impurity; for if it is essential that every one should become the character you are, I am sinful indeed; and cannot, no, will not, insult the Almighty, by offering my own imperfect words."

"I will not argue this matter with you to-night," replied Agnes; "besides, it is right to be diffident of our own powers: but do you think you could, before commencing the study in question, read a short composition with a praying heart?"

"I think I could: at all events I would never make a mockery of it by reading without those feelings."

"Then I will give you a few lines used by many devout Christians in England: they are truly admirable, and you may attach them to the beginning of your Bible. Use them until you feel the aspirations of your own heart supply their place; and may He, who best

knows our various wants and temptations, supply your every defect, and preserve you from every evil."

With tearful eyes Harriet received the first prayer that had ever been put into her hands; and Alfred soon after returning, the conversation took a different turn, until Matilda enquired of her cousin what club he belonged to.

"To a very select and very delightful one, my dear Matilda," replied he; "one that I never leave without regret, and always return to with delight, and constantly feel myself improved by."

"That is charming," returned Matilda, "I am really happy to hear there is such a one; for Fitzallen often complains of his, and papa always returns out of humour and with a headache from the noisy debates. Do, pray, persuade them both to join your club."

"I would fain do so, Matilda, from a thorough conviction that it is the only

description of club which promotes happiness, and never gives a headache by noisy debates."

"And is not very expensive, I conclude, as you are professedly an economical man?"

"Why you know, dear girl, all hobby-horses are expensive; and I would not have my favourite thought vulgarly cheap, especially as it admits ladies."

"O now, Alfred, I know you are laughing at me: no club admits ladies, do, pray, explain yourself."

"It is easily done, my dear: my club is a domestic one, generally held in this room; the members, my precious Agnes, any friend she chooses to admit, your cousin Alfred, and this highly respectable and variously endowed assembly of historians, poets, divines, &c. &c." opening the wire doors of a well-filled library. "Here we have information, amusement, and delight: but no quarrelling, no swearing, no profaneness, nor

infidelity : and could I once see Horace Fitzallen the member of such a society, that painful abhorrence I now feel to his becoming your husband, would no longer exist. But do not deceive yourself, Matilda ; a daring unbeliever, a wild profligate, a gambler, a swearer, and a *gourmand*, cannot render your life happy, cannot make his home the scene of heartfelt comfort, nor his wife and children the companions of his heart and choice.”

“ Indeed, Alfred,” replied the almost weeping Matilda, “ you are very severe : Horace has, I know, been a little irregular and dissipated, but he always says it is for want of a comfortable home ; and were you to see how fond he is of a quiet domestic evening at home, you must be obliged to think better of his morals : and as to his free-thinking, why every body does the same, even papa himself. I am sure it is my wish to do right, but all young men are gay before

they are married, and Miss Acton says, all disagreeable ; so that in this respect, at least, poor Horace must be superior."

Mr. St. Aubin calling at this moment with a carriage for his daughter, put an end to her defence, and Agnes took leave of her friends with an increased regard for Harriet, and pity for the deluded Matilda, who, by the flattering professions of a handsome young man, suffered her eyes to be blinded and her good common-sense to be steeped with the opiate of a first and misplaced affection, against which she had no religion, no sense of future good or ill to oppose as a shield of defence.

Fitzallen, who had his own reasons for hastily bringing matters to a crisis, always contrived to explain away every report to his disadvantage, so as to gain rather than lose by the attack. Of all her friends, he dreaded only her cousins, but to keep from them a fond and weak girl was no very difficult task. St. Aubin did

not approve the match, but his Matilda must please herself ; and Fitzallen talked so largely of his estates and titles in Ireland, that though half believing what every body told her, that an empty baronetcy without a shilling was his whole patrimony, she had not resolution to withstand the bait, nor to abide by her own resolve, and give up the connection ; but after a few more weary weeks, to end the contest, became the wife of a man she did not respect, could not confide in, and was not quite sure she loved.

Scarcely was the ceremony ended, when one of those young tattlers, whom no consideration will prevent from telling a piece of news, abruptly entered the room with “ Well, Matilda, I wish you much joy in your new estate : but only think that poor Esther Penn should have died this very morning. Was it not strange ? And they do say confidently, that your husband is not to have any

share in the concern, but must quit the counting-house immediately, about some gambling nonsense ; these quakers are such queer stiff folks.”

She was here interrupted by her victim falling senseless on the floor, an insensibility from which, had she never recovered, much temporal misery at least would have been spared her.

CHAP. X.

WHEN Sir William Fitzallen found that Isabel had really taken the bold and decisive step of quitting his house for the arms of her lover, and that she was already united to him by the forms of the Roman and Protestant churches, and far on her way to England; his first idea was pursuit, in the hope of her being delayed at the port: this was urged by all the holy fathers, and by two of them put in execution, but to no effect; they overtook the regiment, but beyond that could gain no information of the route they had pursued. The wind stood fair for England, and from every port vessels were constantly sailing, while by the most natural way from Dublin to Holy-

head, there was no hope of stopping their progress. At the end of four days' fruitless search, they returned to Fitzallen, wearied and disappointed; thundered their anathemas against the hapless Emma, who, for this purpose, the trio condescended to visit, not forgetting to include her sister and brother; urged Sir William to devote his remaining son to the church, and finally separated, highly dissatisfied with having ever met.

The two returned to Italy, leaving Sir William and his confessor to their customary pursuits. Time wore away, and the kind father by degrees grew reconciled to the step Isabel had taken. Her happiness, he said, was his first consideration, and as she had not renounced the mother church formally, he lived in hope she would one day sue to be again accepted into its bosom. There were Catholic missionaries in Asia, and from them he hoped much. Always inclined to view that side of a question which pre-

sented the brightest prospect, he did so now, and in idea not only confirmed the wavering faith of his daughter, but converted that of her husband.

His youngest son William, not discovering the slightest *penchant* for a monastic life, was indulged in a strong desire he felt of making a voyage to the West Indies; and as O'Neil cared but little where they went, so that the whole family were disposed of, he cheerfully undertook to forward every requisite for William's voyage. On the eve of his departure he paid a visit to Emma, who, with her fashionable attire, appeared to have put off every feeling that bound her to Fitzallen. She soberly and coolly lectured William for a long time, enquired for and pitied her father, saying, when he wished it, she was ready to see him, hoped he would see his errors, and turn from the blind dependance on man, or sainted spirits, that caused her to shudder while she named it. She then

exhorted her brother to the same, and bid him 'farewell' in a measured tone, and with the composure of a person expecting to meet again the next day.

William was volatile, but loved his sister Emma exceedingly. He could have forgiven her quitting the faith in which they had been educated, if she had done so without ostentation, becoming a Quaker, or striving to convert him; but these were three things William could not brook. Her coolness and distance he thought inhuman, and returned to Fitzallen, wounded, mortified, and disappointed at the success of his visit.

The next day he was to sail from Cork. Sir William felt unusually depressed by this separation from his youngest and now almost only child. He held the spirited boy to his bosom, and wetted his glowing face with the warm tears of parental solicitude. The blank his absence would create in the father's feelings and society now ap-

peared tremendous : for a while he bitterly repented yielding to a boyish inclination, and trusting his darling to all the dangers of climate, fatigue, and the tempestuous ocean ; then recovering himself a little, committed the youthful wanderer to the protection of the saints and holy virgin ; breathed on him a prayer of peace, and tore himself from the encircling arms of the agitated William, who that evening lost sight of his native shore.

It was soon after this that the modest, simple Anne Hammond met Lord Dunmore at the sick bed of a dying penitent in Cork. Anne was not unacquainted with sickness, poverty, or distress, and each found in her an active, judicious, and liberal friend. She blushed, and felt a little confused, at meeting in such a situation a young nobleman, of whom she knew very little even by report, and certainly never expected to meet so employed ; but having once

met, each seemed pleased with the other. Accident or design brought them frequently together, until Anne began to think, that a man with whom she so frequently conversed ought to be known to her parents; yet she found all her courage insufficient to drop the most distant hint of such an idea; and therefore resolved to carefully avoid his lordship for the future. To this resolution she adhered so closely, that Lord Dunmore for a fortnight saw nothing of her, a privation he was surprised to find pained him exceedingly. On examining his heart closely, an examination he was well qualified to make, he started at the discovery it made. "Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that I who have suffered so much, should again — but why not, one object cannot interfere with the other; the one an inhabitant of the realms of bliss, the other a candidate for it. Well, I shall leave the issue to the guidance of the same all-wise Providence who

frustrated my former views and hopes so awfully."

A few days after this wise resolve, Lord Dunmore saw at a distance the plain drab carriage of Joseph Hammond, and hoping it contained his fair daughter, hurried towards it, and was not disappointed. Anne descended from the carriage, accompanied by an elderly female, and entered the door of a shop: Lord Dunmore followed, and immediately joined the friends. At sound of his voice Anne started round, the pure blood quickly mantling on her face, as she instinctively held out her hand. "It is long," said Lord Dunmore, "since I had the pleasure of seeing you, Miss Hammond; but your appearance assures me illness has not detained you from our poor friend Edith, who every day laments your absence. Some powerful and proper motive, I am sure, could alone detain *you* from such a scene."

Anne blushed still deeper, as withdrawing her hand, she replied, “ it was certainly a reason which appeared to me proper and powerful, that prevented my visiting Edith ; but probably I am mistaken. However, thou, friend Frederic, wouldst surely prevent her *feeling* my absence.”

“ That is easier said than done, dear Miss Hammond ; there are a thousand little offices of kindness which fall like healing balm on the penitent and broken-hearted, that your sex alone know how to bestow, beside a manner which can only be attained by the habit of administering to the sick and afflicted, — a habit, I blush to say, I have but lately adopted.”

“ Nay, thee needest not to blush ; for as the blind cannot discern colours or the beauties of creation, so neither couldst thee in a state of mental darkness discern the true colour of thy actions, or the beauty of religious duties ; but if

for the future neglect should mark thy character, then indeed thee wilt blush with cause, but I do hope that will never be the case."

A grateful reply beamed in Lord Dunmore's eloquent eye, but its utterance was prevented by Anne's companion, who advanced, saying, "Anne, my child, didst thee forget the business which brought us to this friend's shop?"

"Indeed, dear mother, at this moment I had entirely forgotten it," replied Anne, "but I will not let one omission make me commit another; — this is Frederic Dunmore, that I mentioned having met so often lately; and, friend Dunmore, this is my dear mother; and I think if you knew each other better, it would prove a mutual satisfaction."

Lord Dunmore expressed his pleasure at this introduction with a frank and manly politeness, perfectly free from flattery or pride; adding, "that he had lately been strongly tempted to call at

Hammond house, presuming on his knowledge of Miss Hammond."

"We should have received thee kindly, if thou hadst done so," replied Mrs. Hammond, "though we have very little acquaintance with the world so called; but our daughter spoke well of thy pursuits, and we are well inclined to trust her judgment."

Lord Dunmore made a suitable reply, and felt more pleased and grateful than he could well appear, that Anne had thought thus favourably of him. From this day Lord Dunmore was a frequent and favourite visiter at Hammond house. His unaffected openness, candour, and sound sense, soon secured him a place in the warm hearts of the friendly Joseph and his excellent wife, who always contrived to convince herself that Joseph's opinions of persons and things were perfectly correct.

This friendly sort of intercourse continued some weeks. Lord Dunmore felt

he loved again ; but forbore to disturb the peace of his friend's family by such an avowal, well aware of the extreme tenacity of the sect to their own forms and opinions, and the almost insurmountable objections to one of their young people marrying out of the pale.

Emma Fitzallen was at this time a resident in the family, and John Hammond her acknowledged lover, to whom she was openly and devotedly attached. Lord Dunmore often felt a sensation of envy as he witnessed the fond affection of the young couple ; but yet he would say to himself, " dear as Anne is become to my heart, I could not even for her renounce my firm adherence to the Protestant church. If ever I marry Anne, she must conform to my religious opinions : this I think she would find but little difficulty in doing. Education, not principle, makes her a quaker, though principle makes her a steady humble Christian. If ever, ah, that *if*, — what

reason have I to suppose the sweet girl will give up her early prejudices in my favour ; after all, I believe I am a coxcomb.”

From a train of thought such as this he was aroused, by Emma declaring she thought there were persons in the world who would venture even to die for the love they bore to another.

Mr. Hammond refused any credit to the assertion, telling her she talked from impulse rather than consideration. — Emma applied to Anne for her opinion.

“ O yes,” replied Anne, “ to be sure one may love well enough to die for the beloved object ; I am sure I —” At that moment she raised her eyes to Dunmore, and meeting his, became sensible of the meaning and impropriety of her expressions ; it seemed like a veil at once torn from her eyes ; her heart and its wanderings stood naked to her view, the bright colour forsook her cheeks,

and becoming pale as marble, she ceased to speak and almost to breathe.

“Of what art thee sure, my child?” said the father, without raising his eyes from the newspaper he held in his hands.

“Only, father, that I am suddenly very sick, and will wish thee good night and retire.”

Her father tenderly bid her good night, and dismissed her with a blessing.

“Will you not shake hands with me, dear Anne?” asked Lord Dunmore, as she was leaving the room without this usual ceremony.

“To be sure I will,” returned she, holding out her hand, but not venturing again to look in his face. He fondly pressed her hand in leading her to the door, but was too delicate to speak, or seek those eyes which had just told him a tale of bliss.

Emma would have gone with her, but Anne entreated to be left alone, observing, she could not talk, and wished to

think. When shut up in her own room a burst of tears relieved her oppressed spirits. “What have I been thinking of?” said she; “just pursuing my own inclinations, without once subjecting myself to the necessary task of strict self-examination, — and what is the consequence? I love this young man, — this *Lord*, that I am sure I could die for him. O foolish girl! probably he thinks nothing about thee; and even if he does, what advantage? — thou a quaker, and he — what? — why a *Christian*: — and to Christians all names must be alike. I could love his church as well as my father’s, because I love him, and believe him a Christian indeed. Well, I know my best method, — my God and my mother, my best friends, shall, as far as I know it myself, read my heart, and direct my conduct. Alas! how could I be so silly not to discover this until my own ready tongue pointed out my fault? — Fault! I do not feel it a fault! I dare

say it is one — but — my mother, I will tell thee all, and learn from thy lips how far I have strayed from the right path.”

For the first night in her life anxiety banished sleep from the innocent Anne. She arose in the morning but little refreshed, and at an early hour sought her mother; but that kind parent still suffered from the headache that had banished her from the family circle the preceding evening, and could not bear even the soft voice of her darling child.

Neither the words nor manner of Anne Hammond on this evening escaped the observation of the eagerly watchful Lord Dunmore, who waited some proof of reciprocal attachment before he ventured to declare sentiments, which he knew would create some commotion in the good friend's family. “This proof,” said he to himself, “I have now happily received, and doubt and uncertainty

shall not, dearest Anne, be added to your newly-awakened feelings, nor longer afflict and torment my peace. I will candidly open my heart to father and daughter immediately."

Thus resolved, Lord Dunmore descended to the breakfast parlour, and found in it only the object of his every thought; he eagerly seized her offered hand, and drawing her to himself, unfettered by restraint, poured out the feelings of his full heart on the ears of the surprised and half-doubting Anne. At length, soothed by his repeated and fond assurances that he *really meant* all he said, between tears and smiles she acknowledged that she did indeed love him very much, but was afraid she sinned against propriety in doing so; "and I have no excuse," added she, "for I well knew friends did not form connections with the high or gay world, nor indeed at all out of themselves: but I did not think of loving thee, did not fancy it was

possible to love, without being wooed. Alas, Frederic, I fear I have done very wrong, and that it must not be."

"And why not, dearest Anne? have I not wooed you these three months, by every attention and kindness in my power. Actions, dear girl, speak more home to the heart than words; and mine have had the effect I desired and prayed for. Oh say not, beloved Anne, it must not be; surely you will not let mere custom interfere with or disturb our happiness."

The entrance of Emma terminated the discourse. On enquiry, it appeared that Mr. Hammond had gone to town at a very early hour with his son, and Emma retiring immediately after breakfast, the lovers were again left to themselves. Lord Dunmore, with great delicacy, expressed his hopes that Anne would not find it impossible to attend with him the established English Church: he had the highest respect for the sect among whom

she had been educated, and would wish her to feel the same, but not to continue a member of their community, or use their language. Anne candidly allowed that her preference arose from the force of habit rather than conviction, and felt willing to believe all her noble lover could say in favour of that church to which she thought him an ornament.

The morning passed swiftly away in mutual explanations; and Anne was surprised on seeing her mother to hear it was four o'clock, and receive something like a gentle rebuke for inattention.

"I do believe, my dear mother," replied Anne, "thou mayest be offended with great justice; I was very early in thy room, but since then, new and unexpected circumstances have engaged my every minute, and I believe my every thought."

"Not unpleasant circumstances, if I may judge from thy countenance, Anne," replied her mother, with a smile.

"No, my mother, far, very far from

unpleasant : if it meet the approbation of my dear father and mother, I shall consider it the happiest circumstance of my life ; but Frederic Dunmore will explain the whole to thee, while I go seek for Emma.”

A few words served to render the observant mother *au fait* of what she before suspected: she had long seen their growing mutual regard, and though she would have preferred a son-in-law of her own persuasion, the excellence of Lord Dunmore's life and conduct reconciled the only objection; she therefore rendered him happy, by frankly avowing her willingness to wave this difference, and accept him as he was, if her husband should think it right to do so.

As soon as the old gentleman awoke from his siesta, he was made acquainted with all that had passed, to which Lord Dunmore gracefully entreated his consent and blessing, regretted the external difference of their modes of worship, and

supplicated that they might not be permitted to shade their days with sorrow, especially as that adopted by him was the choice of a convicted conscience.

The old gentleman was, though strict, rational and liberal, and as, after a long and close examination, he had reason to be perfectly satisfied with the religious principles of Lord Dunmore, and as his wife was ready to cede this particular in favour of the family favourite, and Anne candidly confessed she thought a *Christian*, under any dress, equally acceptable, and the manners and language of Frederic Dunmore such as she should feel happy in copying, and his affections a gift that it would be the whole study of her grateful life to deserve and cherish, the fond father no longer hesitated, but joined their hands; and with a parental blessing, implored that of the Supreme on their union and future lives.

Lady Donovan did not admire this connection of her son's, but, as she re-

spected as well as loved him, hid her chagrin under an appearance of pleasure, that did not for a moment impose on Lord Dunmore, who, however, judged it proper to appear deceived. Lady Loftus, his sister, was so outraged by an alliance so degrading, that she immediately announced her determination of residing in England for the future, to avoid the possibility of a rencontre, and invited her mother to reside with her, an invitation Lady Donovan was but too happy in accepting, especially as her son liberally added to her confined income sufficient to enable her to reside where she chose, should the house of Lady Loftus not prove an agreeable home.

His family thus disposed of, Lord Dunmore became impatient to introduce his lovely bride. Anne was superior to affectation, but wished to see her brother and Emma united before she quitted the parental roof, and with it, the sober, quiet meeting she had all her life at-

tended : but this, the extreme cautiousness of friends in admitting members, and the necessity of Emma becoming one previous to her marriage, prevented. Lady Donovan and her daughter were impatient to leave Ireland, yet professed a desire to remain, that all possible respect might be shown to the wife of Lord Dunmore : these considerations, therefore, urged a more speedy union, and the blushing Anne became Lady Dunmore on the day she completed her twentieth year, and a few days afterwards was admitted a member of that church, to which she still remains a firm and exemplary adherent.

Among the many visitors whom curiosity, and various other motives, attracted to the house of Lord Dunmore and his bride, etiquette demanded that attention of Sir William Fitzallen, whose anger against the Hammond family would not excuse a want of politeness to Lord Dunmore.

Company and the world being in opposition to the rigid principles now professed by Emma, her father did not expect to meet her in Cork ; but it happened, that the morning on which he paid his visit, was one of a public meeting that the Hammond family attended, and being extremely wet, Emma thought she might indulge by sitting an hour with her dear Anne, without interruption. On descending from the carriage, she enquired of the servant if company were with his mistress, and the man not supposing her father could be considered as company, merely answered in the negative. On entering the drawing-room, Emma started with surprise, but quickly recovering herself, she calmly advanced toward Sir William, holding out her hand, and saying, “ I am rejoiced thus unexpectedly to meet thee, father ; wilt thee not give me thy hand, and experience some pleasure in seeing thy daughter in health.”

Sir William shuddered as casting one glance on the drab attire, the close cut hair leaving only one thin straight line across the fair forehead, shaded by a deep drab bonnet: then covering his eyes with both hands, groaned rather than said "Away, away! no child of mine."

Tears started in Emma's eyes as she replied, "I dare not kneel to any but my Maker — not even an offended father; or I would kneel to seek thy forgiveness for thus pursuing the dictates of an awakened conscience — dictates that I found it impossible longer to resist. But if thou dost cast me off, and refuse thyself the comfort of an affectionate child, yet have I other parents who will, in some degree, supply thy place; but thou, my father, thou hast no one to be as a daughter unto thee."

Emotion stopped her utterance. Lord Dunmore and his gentle wife kindly interposed, and, in a short time, Sir

William again felt himself a father — held his Emma to his beating heart, and shed over her the tears of parental forgiveness. By degrees he came to look at the altered dress and manner without disgust, but entreated she would not ask his consent to her approaching marriage.

“ I cannot give it,” said he, “ though I pray that you may be happy in it, if a heretic can be happy.”

Their kind friends rejoicing in this reconciliation, endeavoured to turn the conversation to subjects less interesting, and succeeded in restoring tranquillity.

Other company coming in, Emma rose to go — “ When shall I see thee again?” said she to her father.

“ That, my child, must be uncertain,” returned he — “ I cannot admit you at Fitzallen, but we shall sometimes meet here, and hear frequently through this medium.”

Satisfied with this, Emma bid her mea-

sured farewell, without one trait of that natural feeling which an hour before had so strongly agitated her.

Shortly after this meeting, which was succeeded by several others, Emma became the wife of John Hammond, and a member of their religious community. From this time she seldom saw or enquired after her father : she became as much absorbed in her husband and family as her enthusiastic lofty-souled sister, though she would not, like her, have owned and gloried in it ; on the contrary, her precept and practice on this one subject were in direct opposition to each other.

Sir William heard she was happy, and strove to think himself the same ; but conscience, who would occasionally be heard, embittered his cup of life with her constant reproaches.

No sooner was Sir William alone than O'Neil commenced his well-digested plan of operations : the first of which was,

requesting the abbé to become his confessor — a task the abbé would willingly have undertaken for all who at any time gained the ear of his patron, and which he had long been offended with O'Neil for presuming to withhold.

By this skilful manœuvre O'Neil gained a greater advantage than he had even reckoned on; for, presuming on the supposed key he now held to his every thought and motive, the abbé no longer opposed him or prevented his private conversations with the baronet.

The subject of a general fine on the estate was again brought forward — Sir William's objections became daily fainter and weaker. He considered that one child alone remained to be provided for, the others had chosen their respective paths. For that one O'Neil had assured him nothing could so well provide as the fine in question — why then should he longer hesitate? Horace would probably never return to Europe, or if he did, would

return a rich man; and neither of his daughters could ever want or desire from him. Isabel, in the *East*, *must* be acquiring immense wealth, and, with her husband and family, would probably return in unbounded splendour.

The result was, the fine was passed, Sir William knew not how, nor was conscious of ever being the richer for it. But the language and manner of O'Neil became instantly altered: he no longer even affected to consult Sir William on any proposed alteration, lease, or sale, but pulled down and built up, planted and rooted up with four-fold industry. Soon the pronoun *our* sunk to the possessive one *mine*, and the easy baronet found when too late, that he had given the staff out of his own hand into the hand of one but too capable of exerting his power. Still he flattered himself his children were doing well, when a report reached him that Horace was married, and had, by ill-conduct, forfeited every

claim on the house of Penn and Hammond, which was soon confirmed by a letter from Emma, in reply to one he had sent making enquiries.

She stated that his conduct in the family of Mr. Penn, his continued depravity, his extravagance, and finally his love of gambling, which had led him to secrete sums of considerable consequence, had obliged the house to discard him; but that Mr. Penn would still be his friend if he were inclined to seek an honest subsistence in any other way. She concluded by saying she was grieved to add he was lately married to a young woman of good family and character.

While the heart-struck father was weeping over this account, another reached him — that the vessel in which his youngest son was returning home had perished, with every soul on board. This, dreadful as it was, a very few hours confirmed, and the depravity of the eldest was swallowed up in the untimely fate of

the youngest son. The poor old baronet sat the wan image of despair, without a solitary friend or comforter; his spiritual guide exulting that he had foretold all this when heretics became part of the family. Emma would now fain have visited her father, but was refused admittance; and returned to her own house, happy that one faithful bosom at least would receive her.

It was not long after this that a desire was expressed by the sons of Penn and Hammond to visit the countries in which both held a considerable interest, and preparations were immediately entered into for an exchange as long as desirable.

Previous to quitting her native country, Emma again saw her father at the house of Lady Dunmore; but her feelings had lately become wonderfully concentrated, and her mind, narrowed to the confined circle of sectarianism, regarded all beyond it as wandering in darkness. She exhorted her father to admit the

efficacy of the chastening rod with which he had been afflicted, to turn from his blind errors and superstition, as in all probability they should never meet on earth again. She would gladly meet him in a better world, but to do this he must renounce popery and lead a new life.

Such a meeting was not likely to be satisfactory on either side; and father and daughter parted without even the semblance of regret. The one for his solitary home, rigid priest, and rosary — the other for her husband, child, and a new untried world; between which and her the broad Atlantic rolled, but on whose deceitful surface, Emma, with her richest treasures, embarked as fearless and composed as she would have retired to her peaceful bed-room at Hammond House.

CHAP. XI.

For the first two years every thing went on smoothly in the Honourable George Escott's commercial concerns. He, with his still beautiful wife, were among the gayest and most admired, whether in Madras or in Calcutta. Their presence was hailed with delight, and their departure regretted as the withdrawing of light and life from society.

Since he had quitted the army, Mr. Escott and his family had spent much of their time in Calcutta, being preferable for society and many other reasons to Madras. In this place, as in Madras, the first place among the leaders of fashion and rulers of elegance was, with general consent, given to Isabel; but it was not the superiority in fashion and elegance alone

that Isabel aspired to — she sought and obtained it for the strength of her mind, the clearness of her judgment, the decision of her thoughts and actions, and high culture of a fine imagination. In conversation, she spoke with the tone of one unaccustomed to contradiction: in subjects of doubt or dispute, she always gave her decision with a manner that implied it was the fiat of unerring judgment, and with a confidence and self-possession that no one ever dared to dispute: by all she was looked up to as the first woman in every respect that part of the globe afforded.

The magnanimity of her conduct during her husband's illness and temporary embarrassments had become generally known, and shed a light and brilliancy around the lofty imperious Isabel that is seldom attained by a life of virtuous and praiseworthy actions. Conscious of the exalted ground on which she stood, the deference shown to her

opinions, and the species of idolatry paid her by a highly informed and sensible husband, as well as by a host of others, Isabel neither felt elated nor honoured. She considered this homage as the meed naturally due to her very superior abilities, and received it with as much calmness and self-appreciation as her children's morning or evening caresses. To both she thought herself entitled, and by both felt gratified, but not honoured: thus apparently standing firm on the summit of a slippery acclivity, attained without difficulty, and from which she looked with cool contempt on the many who struggled and strove with toilsome labour to climb the steep ascent with little or no success.

There were a few who regretted that such strong energy and warm feelings should be spent for nought — that such rare talents should be exerted in the cause of infidelity — or that one, whose influence was almost unbounded, should use it only to diffuse the worst and most

erroneous principles. There were others who envied her prescriptive right to superiority, and in the malice of a little mind, looked and nodded unutterable things. To all this Isabel was happily blind and deaf, but had she seen and heard it all, it would have affected her no more than a passing breath of air, or the slight shadow of a dream.

Another lovely girl was added to her family. Though both parents still regretted that the long desired son was snatched from them, and his place supplied by a daughter, both were too fond of the little stranger to let any portion of that regret be visible in their conduct. In the education of her children Isabel was as eccentric and decided as in every other department: she would never seek to *win* her children's love or respect — both should be the *reward* of her merit, the voluntary offering of approving reason. She could not condescend to accept the mere blind animal love some

parents were so desirous of, and which may be enjoyed in common with birds and beasts ; neither would she in any little case of intricacy judge for her children. They were taught to consider themselves as rational beings, competent to judge and act on almost any occasion ; they were to ask *advice* of their parents *only*, and not even of them *direction* ; nor were they ever reproved for not following that advice, except no *reason* could be given for neglecting it.

The only fault Mr. and Mrs. Escott ever warned their children against, was *acting without a reason* ; this, in their opinion, was the source of every other ill. They were taught to avoid falsehood, by, as Isabel said, “ removing the temptation to it : ” thus they knew no fear. No accident or negligence was ever punished ; no fault that had any reason to excuse it, considered as a fault ; and the children never supposed capable of having done wrong. It was strictly com-

manded that the mention of falsehood, or any deviation from virtue, should never be made in their presence ; they were to be bred up in ignorance of vice, and totally unacquainted with the very name of revealed religion or the Bible.

Isabel was naturally too independent to pursue any system laid down by another ; but what in her plan of education was not original, was the airy speculative system of Rousseau, who was still her favourite and admired author. Clara, the eldest of these *reasonably* educated infants, was now six years of age, and promised to be in person lovely as her mother, but in mind widely differed. A love of pleasure, finery, splendour, and show, already manifested itself in Clara, who, in viewing her little person decked with costly ornaments, and arranging the glossy ringlets of her auburn locks, had already learnt to consume more time before a mirror than over her lessons.

She was imperious, haughty, and violent to an extreme: unaccustomed to the slightest controul, she would issue her commands with the mouth of a cherub, and the manner of a *petit* tyrant.

Cecilia, the second, was of a different character—mild, sweet, and smiling; all the virtues seemed only wanting a fostering hand to show in her their richest blossoms. She was in person and in disposition the counterpart of her father, and on that account particularly dear to the heart of her idolizing mother.

The youngest had been called Eliza, after Mrs. Delville, who had with friendly importunity urged the necessity of their being baptized by the resident English clergyman; but both Mr. and Mrs. Escott ridiculed the idea; indeed Isabel said they had no title to the rite of baptism, being neither of them members of that or any other church. Mrs. Delville soon explained away this objection, but made no progress toward the desired end.

“ No, no, dear Eliza,” said Major Escott, “ we will not enter into vows we do not intend to hold sacred, nor promise in our children’s name what we do not ourselves believe ; and thus, by practising deceit, give them a speaking lesson, the arguments of which they will but too readily understand and apply. Let me but see my girls such as their mother, and I shall glory in them indeed ; in the mean time we will leave them unfettered by law or restriction, like ourselves,

Slaves to no sect, who take no private road,
But look through nature up to nature’s God.

“ It would be all very well,” replied Mrs. Delville, “ if this ‘ nature’s God’ you speak of were any thing beyond a chimera — if he were a being from whom you expected judgment as well as mercy. The day, depend on it, will come, when the fallacy of all this will plainly appear. Oh, that it may not be too late — that the door may not be shut before your lamps are trimmed.”

“I dare say the wish is very kind,” rejoined Isabel; “but as I do not even understand its allusion, you will not expect me to profit by it. But *a propos* of profiting, Eliza; if the disturbed state of the country should render it necessary for your regiment to join the troops in action, do you intend to profit by former anxieties, and accompany your husband, as every good wife ought to do?”

“I hope, in such, a case to profit by my anxieties,” returned Mrs. Delville, “by placing a firmer confidence in the superintending Providence who spared him through so many dangers, and restored him in safety to his family, and not yielding so much to a faithless anxiety.”

“Then you really do not intend to go with him,” exclaimed Isabel.

“No, indeed,” quietly replied Mrs. Delville, “I have no such intention; if I could not leave three children, how am I to desert four, or how expose them to the

evils of travelling and climate? It is the desire of my husband, and the decree of my own judgment, that I should remain with them, and intrust their dear father to the almighty care of Him who doeth all things well.”

“Defend me from such cool prosing,” ejaculated Isabel; “why, Eliza, it requires all the knowledge I have of your really warm heart to convince me you are not grown as cold and lifeless as Emma Hammond, who, in a letter I yesterday received from her, speaks of the death of her excellent father-in-law with all the composure she would have displayed in relating the death of Socrates; and in like manner speaks of his virtues and his eternal happiness: a bad recommendation you pious ladies give of your religion, that it should produce an ossification of the heart.”

“But you acknowledge, Isabel, that in my case appearances are false; and it is more than possible this is the case with

Emma. I too received a letter from her, and if her expressions of concern for Mr. Hammond's death are cool, it must be allowed those she employed when speaking of her husband and children are warm enough to satisfy even your romantic feelings."

"No such thing ; I assure you, Eliza, it is all mere selfishness, of all feelings the most detestable. Her delectable John, and her darling Abrahams and Hannahs, and all the patriarchal tribe, fill all the paper she can spare from preaching ; and in a postscript comes this dear old man's death, and some slight mention of poor Horace, who, I fancy, does not find America that Elysium he expected to do. Oh I hate such selfishness."

"This is not quite consistent with your usual professions of connubial and parental devotion, I think, Isabel."

"Perfectly, Eliza : it is not Emma's devotion to her family I blame, but the

technical cant with which she would strive to hide it, and give advice to those who could stand the wreck of worlds with more fortitude than she would see a kitten expire; and the cold-heartedness displayed towards her kindest friend, and her clever superior brother, because, forsooth, he is not of her conventicle. Eliza, I love you very much; but if you were so to conduct yourself towards Delville's mother, while she continues the kind creature she is, I should absolutely hate you."

"I cannot reconcile this with your philosophy," replied Mrs. Delville; "however, as I would be sorry to incur your hatred, I shall be careful; and as I see my carriage and darlings advancing, shall, without fearing from you the charge of selfishness, bid you good day, and join the little troop."

Isabel had now been married seven years, and with the exception of one storm, had enjoyed greater happiness

than usually falls to the lot of human nature in that state. Of this both Isabel and her husband were perfectly aware, and as perfectly convinced, that the merit was entirely their own, to which might be ascribed their escape from disasters and difficulties that many fell into.

But the patience and fortitude with which this self-support would enable them to meet trials, was now to be put to the proof. Emboldened by success, Mr. Escott, and his partner Creswell, had lately ventured their vessels and cargoes on very slight insurance. Escott objected to this at first, but soon began to think it wisdom to make a certain saving, and ceased to be anxious as to the result.

Mr. Escott was one day speaking in high terms of their prudence and consequent prosperity, when a packet of letters was delivered. The first he opened was from an English correspondent, and contained intelligence of the failure of a house from which a consider-

able sum was due : he closed it, consoling himself that it was not one of still greater consequence, and opened the second ; it was full of misfortune, one vessel's cargo, crew and all, was gone to the bottom of the sea ; another wrecked, and a third much damaged. He held five other letters in his hand — he opened each separately, and like Job's messengers, each brought information of loss. Escott gnashed his teeth in fruitless rage, stamped the letters under his feet, cursed Creswell's adventurous boldness, the seas, the bankrupts, the defaulters, the captains, his cruel fate, and gave way to the utmost paroxysms of passion and enraged disappointment. At last, exhausted by the force of his feelings, he sat quietly down to think how he should break the dire tidings to Isabel, or support his family in their usual style.

For the first time since his marriage he could not meet his wife ; a short note, pleading unavoidable engagements, was

his substitute at dinner: in the words, the writing, the folding, Isabel traced a trembling hand, and heart ill at ease: her fears soon took alarm; an excuse was sent to her evening party, and the hours spent in watching and listening to every passing sound.

At a late hour Escott made his appearance, kind and smiling as usual. To the fond and anxious enquiries of Isabel he replied, that some losses at sea had obliged him to remain, that their amount might be the better ascertained; he soothed her by an assurance that the losses were not great, and a little time and industry would effectually remedy their effects. But the world were better informed; and in every company and place of amusement, Isabel met, to her high spirit the worst of all mortifications, real and affected pity, which often scarcely covered the insult it was intended to convey. Ten days of such torture as this was to Isabel an age of misery un-

bearable ; and she immediately departed for Calcutta, with her husband and children : but a long and troublesome journey was but ill repaid — the news of their losses had travelled there before them ; and the beautiful, honourable Mrs. Escott, found more mortifications in the governor-general's court than in all Madras.

A variety of losses and unpleasant circumstances still pursued Mr. Escott ; and Calcutta soon became to him a place of extreme wretchedness, which it was the labour of his life to hide from Isabel. He could not bear she should for a moment think him imprudent, nor could he endure the idea of abridging any luxury or convenience, or of agitating her mind, more than the gossip of impertinence unavoidably did.

She was now near her fifth confinement, and unusually delicate and nervous. Escott remembered with agonising faithfulness her sufferings on a former occasion, and the consequent loss of his long wished-

for son, that hope was again presented him, and he inwardly vowed no earthly thing should alarm or disturb her peace: to this end he hovered near her with more than lover-like assiduity, crushed spleen in its bud by candid good-nature, and silenced report by unvaried cheerfulness. Isabel, satisfied with her husband's assurances and apparent hilarity, looked down with proud disdain on the miserable attempts of the mean and envious to bring her to their level: she was higher, more dignified, and more imperious than ever. When her proud spirit, as it sometimes would, became chafed and irritated, she uttered such contemptuous cutting sarcasms, as sent the crest-fallen heroes or heroines, to repair their plumes in the shades of retirement.

“ I pity her, poor thing,” said a lady of acknowledged goodness, “ she has been spoilt by flattery, and is unfortu-

nately proud. If Escott should indeed be a ruined man, it will prove a severe blow to the beautiful sceptic."

"Dear, dear," returned her auditress, "there is Mrs. Escott, I am sure she heard all you said; how sorry I am—she will feel so humbled."

Isabel turned her dark eye, strongly expressive of profound contempt, on the speaker, as she haughtily demanded, "Did you ever, madam, see mischievous boys, with vicious labour, scratch holes at the foot of a tall cedar?"

"Yes, madam, very often."

"And did you ever see the cedar 'humbled' by such poor attempts?" pursued she, in a sarcastic tone; and without waiting a reply, turned from the discomfited ladies, and walked to the upper end of the room.

"You might have replied," said the first speaker, "that you have seen many a cedar torn up by the roots, while the humble shrub at its foot bent beneath

the storm, and recovered with returning sunshine ; but, perhaps, it is better not to irritate such a high spirit ;” and with this sage reflection Isabel and her concerns were for the time forgotten.

The report of fever being prevalent in Calcutta, alarmed Major Escott for his Isabel and their children. He became extremely anxious that they should return to Madras : Isabel thought the fatigue of a long journey after the hot months had commenced, would be attended with more risk to herself than any she could incur in Calcutta ; and that proper precaution would save her husband and children. But Escott’s mind was restless and wretched ; many causes that he did not choose to avow induced him to leave Calcutta : where he went was not so much the object, as to go, and home appeared the natural resource.

In compliance with these wishes, and yielding to arguments that did not satisfy her, Isabel commenced her journey

home ; but long ere it was completed the little Clara discovered symptoms of indisposition that alarmed her fond parents exceedingly ; the more so, as, strongly asserting her own right of judgment, she resolutely refused to take any kind of medicine, or refrain from any food she chose. By the time she reached home Clara was extremely ill, and equally rebellious. The physician who attended her pronounced heat and fatigue to have been the cause ; and strictly forbidding Isabel to visit the invalid's apartment, undertook himself to administer medicine, blisters, &c., and in a few days had the pleasure of pronouncing the little refractory pupil of the new school out of danger.

“ You have experienced some heavy trials lately, my dear Isabel,” said Mrs. Delville, as the doctor shut the door. “ I hope they will be made serviceable to you, by teaching you to look to the

fountain of goodness for support under, and relief from them."

"I look only to myself and my husband for support or relief," replied Isabel; "whatever our trials are or may be, we are able to bear and conquer them; — we are no complaining, whining, low-spirited mortals, with a long string of submissive cant on our tongues and rebellion in our hearts. The chances have gone a little against us lately, but there requires no supernatural power to account for it. Cresswell's mismanagement caused the whole; Clara's illness too owes its origin to travelling in the heat, and its cure to good attendance; so you see I need not the interference of your favourite unknown friend, Providence, to give rational reasons for cause and effects."

"Yet, Isabel, that good Providence watches over you, ungrateful as you are; for had not a blessing attended the good attendance your child got, she would

not this day have been pronounced out of danger."

" Indeed, Eliza, I am obliged to say you are talking nonsense : — that natural causes will produce natural effects, is an acknowledged axiom ; the human frame is a piece of intricate machinery, and any thing happening to injure one part, spoils the harmony of the whole ; but repair the injured part, and all becomes perfect again ; — but you may as rationally talk of a blessing attending your watch-maker, if he repairs your repeater for you."

" I am sorry to hear you argue in such a strain, my dear Isabel ; if you would let this chastening rod be useful, it might spare you yet heavier ones ; for depend upon it, you must learn your own insufficiency, and how entirely you are kept by a superintending power, if kept at all."

" Fear nothing for me, Eliza ; your weaker mind may need this visionary

support, — mine does not. You have seen me these eight years, *malgré* all your prognostics, not only standing firm, but in that time I have attained a height that a poor dependant Providence-seeking dunce would not dare to glance her timid eye at. What does not exist, I cannot learn, — I have no ‘*insufficiency*.’ For all that may happen I am equal; and casting my protecting arms around my adored husband and children, would proudly bid fate do her worst.”

Alas! it was an empty boast, — an edifice raised on a foundation of sand; around which the storm was gathering, that soon broke with frightful violence, tumbling before it the bright and mighty ruin of that which had so lately dared its power.

Major Escott’s disposition and constitution, though both apparently good, were formed for fair-weather life, such as with very few exceptions he had hitherto enjoyed. Disappointment or

perplexity preyed on his very vitals ; he felt it as an evil never before experienced, and wasted health and strength in endeavouring to combat what Christian resignation would have taught him to extract a useful lesson from. Accustomed to see the bright side of the picture alone, the reverse filled him with dismay, — that no faith or confidence he possessed would serve as a specific against : — thus for four months he had kept up a continual warfare within, with what he called fate. Too truly attached to his wife and children to be careless of their interest, or indifferent to the most distant prospect of their injury or distress, he contemplated with horror the almost daily accounts of failure and disaster that met his bewildered eyes ; yet desirous beyond every thing of concealing their misfortunes from a wife he knew would but too deeply feel them, and striving to hope each day would clear his prospects, he was still, in com-

pany or with his family, the charming, gay, fascinating, polite man of the world, — the well-informed, brilliant Escott, that at first won, and still retained the undivided heart of Isabel.

On returning from a large dinner party one evening, Isabel thought her idol looked ill and fatigued. Ever on the alarm for him, she would instantly have sent for a physician; but Escott laughed at her fears, and assured her a night's rest would perfectly restore him.

Isabel strove to believe him, but could not sleep herself, and all night heard the disturbed, uneasy murmurs of her husband; who however in the morning declared himself quite well; while his flushed face and heated hand contradicted the assertion. During the three days he continued thus, Isabel had regained her confidence and tranquillity; but the fourth was doomed to upset the whole; Major Escott lay raving in a burning fever, during the paroxysms of

which it was scarcely possible to keep him in his bed, while the exhaustion that followed bore every appearance of death.

In this dread case what became of poor Isabel? Of sickness she knew no more than her infant daughter, and had never contemplated a fever but through her favourite Rousseau ;—she had always fancied it a disorder of all others the most interesting ; in which, like “ *La Nouvelle Heloise*,” people sat up, saw their friends, talked, were cheerful, eat, drank, and dressed. Alas ! thought she, as her raving, insensible husband, spotted and disfigured, lay before her, Rousseau never could have witnessed a fever, — never was in the chamber of death ; — for this, and this cannot be death, is dreadful beyond imagination. Oh ! if all he has said and insinuated should be thus foreign to truth, and that great and mighty man, Voltaire, if, after all, he did indeed die so wretchedly as Eliza Delville describes,

if he was convinced all his life had been laborious falsehood, — horrible thought ! — should this dear sufferer and myself have been believing a lie, stedfastly rejecting the truth — But these are enervating considerations, — away then with them for the present, — I need strength, resolution, and activity.”

To her usual domestics Isabel now added the good widow Hunter, and Mrs. Delville, whose relative duties prevented her assisting in the task of watching and care, sent her faithful, humble attendant, Kitty Hunter, whose recovered health enabled her to be a valuable auxiliary, and from whom she might constantly hear the exact situation of her loved friends.

Major Escott daily grew worse, and the widow daily more importunate that Mrs. Escott might be made acquainted with his danger, to which she obstinately shut her eyes ; but nurse was only treated as a babbling, silly old woman by the medical attendants, and forbid to drop

a distant hint of what she knew nothing about.

It was after a visit, in which Isabel had been assured by the whole train that her husband was decidedly better, that, yielding to their advice, and the persuasions of her attendants, she retired for the purpose of obtaining some repose, leaving only the widow in her husband's darkened room. After a long silence, interrupted only by the short convulsive breathings of the sufferer, Mrs. Hunter fancied she heard an indistinct sound of words issuing from the bed, and drawing nearer, plainly distinguished, "It is false, my Isabel, all they say is false ; there is an Eternity and eternal punishments,—and to that only you and I are entitled." The widow lifted up her heart in grateful prayer that the good work, thus apparently beginning, might not stop here. After another interval of quiet, the enquiry, "Who is here ? who is in the room ?" drew nurse to the bed, with

“ Nurse Hunter, sir,—do you not recollect me ?”

“ Perfectly, nurse ; and am glad you are here ; I want to talk to you. Do you think, nurse, a whole life spent in disobedient error may be repented and pardoned on a death-bed ?”

It was a question the conscientious widow scarcely dared assent to ; yet she thought Scripture offered some few proofs of a late repentance being accepted, and those she adduced ; urging, with all the simple pathos of true Christianity, the necessity of examining if repentance be real and deeply seated ; — “ if it be such,” said the widow, “ be assured, dear sir, that a God of ‘ abundant mercy’ will not reject you.”

“ I have thought too much of mercy ; but now I see the justice, Divine justice,” groaned Major Escott. “ But where is my wife, my Isabel ? fetch her to me.”

Not daring nor indeed wishing to disobey, nurse summoned the fatigued

Isabel from the first sleep she had enjoyed since her husband's illness. Summoning all her fortitude, and confident he was now rapidly recovering, Isabel presented herself at the bedside with tolerable composure.

"You are better, my beloved," said she, "those dear eyes again look like themselves."

"I don't know," faintly replied Escott; "but I want, my dearest love, to tell you that I am convinced the Scriptures are true and sacred; that there are eternal punishments, and that you and I deserve them and nothing else."

"Do not, my darling, agitate yourself about these things just now," returned the trembling Isabel. "I have had some suspicions of this kind myself lately, and when you are quite well we will talk of and examine it thoroughly; but at present do not think of any thing but of getting better."

"I wish, my Isabel, that my soul

were even as well as my body ; but nurse thinks a late repentance may, perhaps, be accepted ; — oh ! Isabel, delay no longer.” Here thought and rationality ceased ; he again wandered in wild delirium, and Isabel felt her fortitude and hope fast yielding to despair.

“ What have you been saying to him,” demanded she of the widow, “ of repentance ? what can you know about it ? or who can hope for future happiness, if such a life as his needs to be repented of ? ”

“ I know only what my Bible teaches me,” returned nurse, “ which is, that ‘ we have all sinned,’ and have all ‘ gone astray,’ that ‘ without holiness, no man can see the Lord ;’ and that ‘ except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven ;’ ‘ except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ ”

“ Silence, nurse, you will drive me as mad as you have my husband. Oh ! why

did I leave the room to give you an opportunity for all this unfeeling nonsense : cruel woman, had he not suffered enough, but you must drive him distracted with your notions of godliness, he who never yet committed a sin. Alas ! for such as you, if this best of human beings is in danger.”

“ Alas ! for me, indeed, my dear madam,” replied the humble nurse, “ if I were to depend on my own goodness for salvation : but, indeed, all I said to poor Major Escott was very different, and all of a comforting kind. But do, pray, ma’am let me send for the new chaplain. Mrs. Delville says he is a true Christian, and he will talk to you and your dear husband better than I can.”

“ No, no : we want none of his or your talking to, which would only drive my husband into his grave, and leave me a wretched widow, and my infants miserable orphans. No, no ; think as you choose, and leave us to do the same :

when he is quite well, indeed, we will talk the matter over, but not at present."

For several days Major Escott continued to enjoy intervals of freedom from pain and delirium : during these lucid periods he was anxiously intent on the great work of repentance and salvation ; and Isabel, to whom his words had ever been those of an oracle, listened with profound and anxious attention, and for the *first time in her life* turned to the volume of inspiration to read its sacred texts *to a dying husband*. It was at this critical period that Colonel Delville, after a long absence, returned in safety to his beloved wife and family : after hearing from her the state in which his early favourite lay, he unhesitatingly declared his intention of immediately going to him, and awaiting the result. Eliza's heart would fain have objected, but her better feelings triumphed. " If you were spared

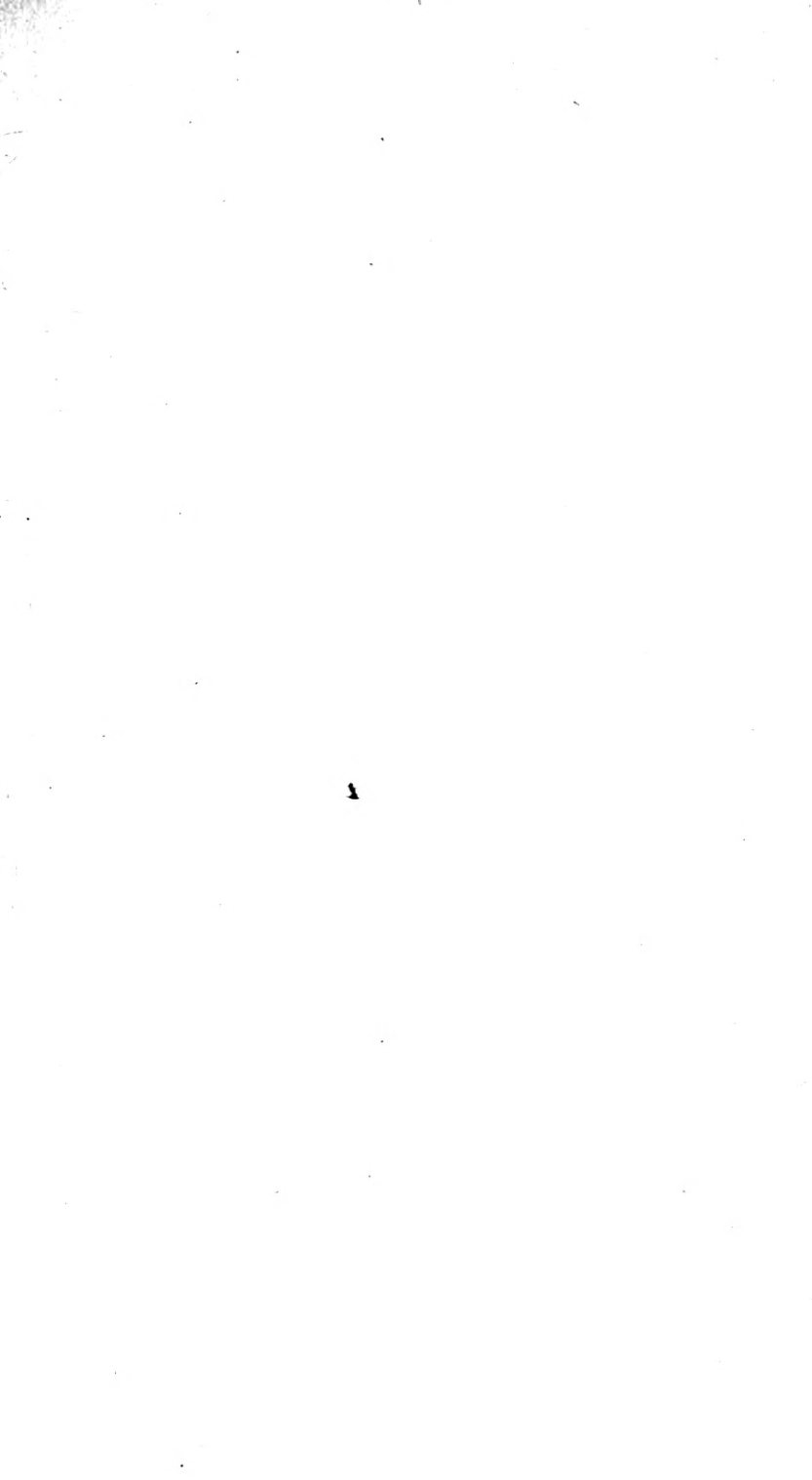
in your country's cause," said she, "how shall I dare doubt in one of much greater magnitude."

Isabel received the Colonel as a messenger from heaven, she would not believe it possible that her husband should be taken from her, and was assured if his mind were easy, he would immediately recover; and Colonel Delville, she knew, to be a tried friend, qualified to advise and instruct. All that friendship, joined to active piety, could do for his temporal and eternal interests, was done by Colonel Delville, who, for ten days and nights, quitted not his friend's chamber:—all that love, vigilance, and attention unbounded could bestow, was bestowed by the fond, devoted wife:—all that nursing and kindness could do, was done by the kind widow:—all that medicine and constant attendance could do, was done faithfully by the skilful physicians:—and all that a pious and

sensible clergyman could effect by prayer and exhortation, was done by the Company's chaplain. — For his immortal part we trust those cares were not in vain. Though late the enquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" it was made in earnest, and we humbly hope in *this* instance the late doubtful and dangerous repentance was accepted. For his mortal part all cares were vain, Isabel with a burning brain and tearless eye knelt by his bed; that dear hand, whose every pulse beat fainter, clasped in hers, her eyes fixed on those death-clad sunken features, which had ever beamed love and joy on her: with the calmness of despair she watched each shortening breath, and when convinced the last deep sob was really drawn, pressed her cold hand across his clammy brow, to close, for the last time, those eyes she could have gazed on for ever; then uttering a short hysteric laugh, fell senseless by his side. From this scene of distress the Colonel

tenderly removed her, almost inclined to hope her life and sorrows might end together; but Isabel had yet a chequered path to tread—had yet her grand decision to make.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



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